THE MERCHANT'S CHILDREN

A STORY FOR THE YOUNG

ELEANOR STREDDER

Alfred Ogden

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"Greville went on emptying his pockets"

Page 197

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THE DUCK BOY'S RAFT

Page 153

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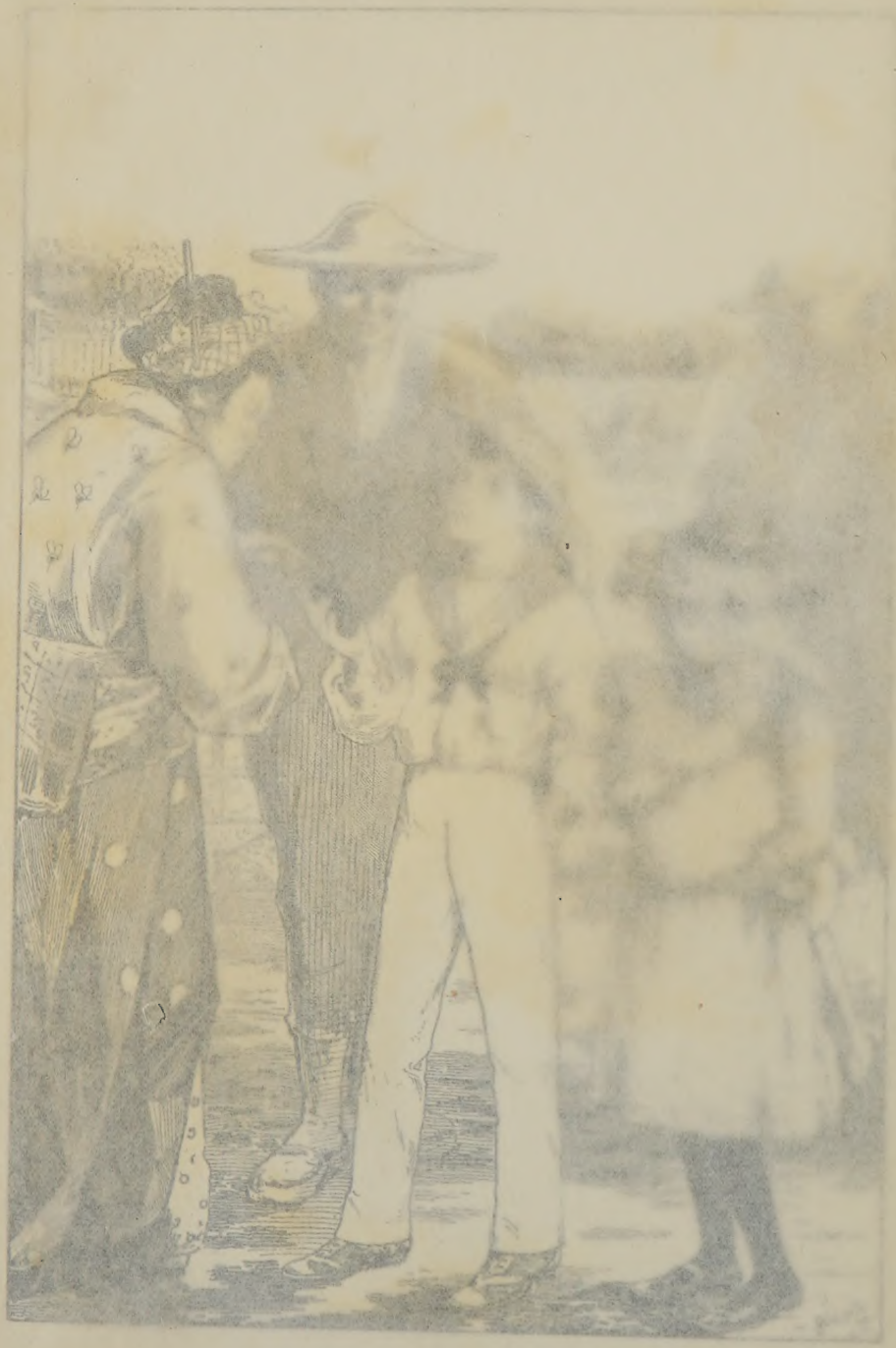
NEW-YORK



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T. NELSON & SONS

LONDON, EDINBURGH & NEW-YORK.

THE MERCHANT'S CHILDREN

A Story for the Young

BY

ELEANOR STREDDER

Author of "Jack and his Ostrich,"
"Archie's Find,"
&c.

"So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

T. NELSON AND SONS

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Contents.

I.	THE TEA-WAREHOUSE, ...	9
II.	IN THE SAMPAN, ...	18
III.	ARRIVED AT LAST, ...	27
IV.	THROUGH THE RICE-FIELDS, ...	35
V.	RESCUED, ...	45
VI.	WHAT SHALL WE DO?	53
VII.	AT HOME, ...	63
VIII.	MRS. LYNTHORNE'S RETURN, ...	69
IX.	IN HANKOW, ...	76
X.	THE ITALIAN SISTERS, ...	86
XI.	MORNING BY THE RIVER, ...	100
XII.	A THIRD TRY, ...	109
XIII.	WINTER IN CHINA, ...	117
XIV.	WINTER AMUSEMENTS, ...	129
XV.	ENNUI, ...	139
XVI.	AN ALARM, ...	147
XVII.	THE RIOT, ...	162

XVIII. KOH-PI IS LOST, ... 175

XIX. THE SEARCH, ... 188

XX. A NIGHT OF PERIL, ... 206

XXI. THE STEPS IN THE ROCK, ... 219

XXII. THE MANDARIN AT HOME, ... 231

XXIII. SET FREE, ... 244

THE MERCHANT'S CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

THE TEA-WAREHOUSE.

IT was the twenty-third of May, the middle of the great Chinese tea-harvest. What a queer harvest it was, gathering the tiny leaves of the tea-plant! Every one must be plucked separately by hand. If we wandered the wide world through, such another harvest could not be found. We in England, who think only of the rustling corn and heavy sheaves, can hardly realize what tedious work it is for the poor Chinamen. How they get through it as they do, in about three weeks, is a wonder.

These are three weeks of ceaseless toil, from dawn to dark, for every man, woman, and child who can work; especially in Hankow, the great tea-market of China—we might say, the great tea-market of the world. The city was like a mighty bee-hive, not a

single drone within it. Everything that could work was working its hardest, except the merchant's children; and they were left to their own devices, with nothing to do.

Their father, the resident agent of one of the largest London tea-warehouses, was the best judge of tea among the English merchants. His office was crowded from morning to night with blue-robed "Celestials," as the Chinese call themselves in their self-conceit. He had not time even to look at his children; and their mother was away. It was a slow holiday for the little brother and sister. It was too hot to enjoy their play. Greville had left the garden, to find amusement in watching the shoals of native boats and the forests of junks always crowding the mighty river that runs through the city.

Every one of them, from the gayest junks of the richest mandarins (as the Chinese gentlemen are called) to the meanest boat or sampan, with its gipsy-like awning, was laden with tea. In the midst of these countless sails and splashing oars, Greville gazed with boyish pride at more than one British tea-ship riding at anchor on the yellow water, awaiting its cargo.

Greville chose his favourite "look-out" high up among the spreading branches of the tallest of the trees which the little knot of English merchants had planted by the river-bank. He leaned eagerly forward. His eye was fixed on a small white cloud in the distance, which soon developed into a puffing column of steam.

Greville began his descent at once, dropping from bough to bough with as much speed as the excessive heat permitted.

"It is, I am sure," he repeated—"it is another ship coming in. I must run and tell father."

He crossed the beautiful avenue, and re-entered his father's garden, keeping well in the shade of the feathery bamboos which surrounded it.

"Cornelia!" he shouted to his sister, who had gone indoors, "where is father?"

"In the office, of course," she answered, in a languid tone, as if she were half asleep.

Greville paused and hesitated, then, with his usual impetuosity, made up his mind to push his way through the crowd who were thronging the entrance to the office, and watch his opportunity to whisper the good news to his father.

The merchant's place of business, or "hong" as it is called in China, looked like a stately mansion in the midst of a lovely garden. The white portico, and the handsome colonnade supporting the veranda along the front, facing the river, led to the spacious rooms inhabited by his family. The tea-warehouses and offices were at the back, and occupied at least one-half of the building. There were about fourteen similar hongs, which the English merchants had built for themselves outside the city, on a piece of ground they had hired of the Chinese government for ninety-nine years.

This piece of ground was usually called the English Concession. It was a pretty little place, with its park-like avenue, soft velvet grass, and neat gravel road. It was amongst the trees of this avenue Greville had chosen his look-out.

The merchants had also built three or four wharves and a small church; so they lived apart from the vast multitudes within the city—a little group of strangers in a very strange land.

It was some time before Greville could make his way through the noisy, chattering crowd of Chinamen thronging the doorway of his father's office, jostling each other to see which could get in first, and vociferating at the top of their voices. How queer they looked in their blue robes, with their wide, open sleeves reaching to their knees, and all their hair shaved off, except one long plait hanging down their backs! Every man had his fan, and some an umbrella as well. Those who knew they must wait were fanning themselves vigorously. Most of the outsiders, who were continually hurrying up, used theirs to shade their bare heads from the sun. Others who were intent upon business shut up their fans and tucked them under the long plait of hair. It always made Greville laugh to see the fans stuck on the back of the men's necks, especially when those men happened to be coolies or day-labourers, who went about nearly naked, hauling in the bales of tea, if they belonged to the warehouses; or working in pairs, if they

came up from the city, with huge baskets of tea, slung on a bamboo pole, which they carried on their shoulders.

Such was the crowd through which Greville had to edge his way.

Once inside, the office was cool and spacious. But he had come at an unlucky moment. His father was one of the most particular men in the world. Everything in his office must be done with mathematical precision. There were plenty of windows in the room, all provided with sun-shutters on the outside; and these shutters had to be arranged every day so that exactly the same amount of light was thrown upon the long table. There was something wrong with the shutters. Two required closing just another quarter of an inch, and a third slanting one-third more. Greville saw the irritation on his father's brow. He saw his nerves quiver as he laid one thin hand on the window-sill, and like a wise boy he slipped into a quiet corner, waiting his chance.

He knew that without such care the fresh-gathered tea could not be properly tested. To a stranger it might have seemed all fuss and fidget, but Greville knew better. He counted one hundred and forty-seven different samples of tea which had been brought in that morning. The samples were in little tin canisters, which stood in rows at the back of the long table.

"Poor father!" thought Greville; "it is making

him quite ill. Just fancy what it must be to taste all those different teas in one morning, and then to be writing as hard as he can half the night! That Mr. Raynham ought to have been here to help him."

The blinds were properly arranged at last. Greville saw his father turn away from the windows and take up a small pair of scales. He was at his elbow in a moment.

"Don't interrupt me," interposed Mr. Lynthorne, catching sight of his little son's eager face. "There is no room for you here, my boy," he continued, in such a decided tone Greville did not even venture to utter a word.

"Good news won't spoil," he said to himself: "I must not worry father."

He was out of sight in a moment, under the table; whilst his father opened each little canister in succession, and examined its contents. The value of the tea depended upon the sweetness of its fragrant scent. He held each canister as if it had been a lady's *vinaigrette*, slowly inhaling the pleasant perfume.

When he had gone the whole length of the table, he turned and spoke to one of his Chinese clerks, who acted as his interpreter. Very few Englishmen can speak Chinese; but some of the Chinamen have learned a little English, also a little Portuguese, and a little French, and perhaps a few words of Russian, which they confuse together. The result is very absurd. They call it "talking business," only no

Chinaman can properly pronounce the word. They all say "pidgin" for business, and this "pidgin English" is a far more ridiculous jargon than "nigger English" itself.

The clerk took up the little tin muster Mr. Lynthorne had pushed aside, and finding out its owner, who was sitting on the floor, gravely informed him,—

"Number one top-side tea-tasting man lookee pekoe. No can see. Pekoe point where?"

The disappointed owner scratched his back in his perplexity at having his sample rejected, just as a rustic countryman of ours gives a tug at his hair to quicken his brain, as he gabbled out a lengthened explanation why there was so little pekoe or tea-blossom in his sample.

On the other side of the table there was a long row of tiny white cups and saucers, a sand-glass which ran for five minutes precisely, and a tea-kettle boiling over a spirit-lamp. At the urgent entreaty of the Chinaman, Mr. Lynthorne took back the rejected sample to complete his test.

He weighed a small quantity, about a teaspoonful, into one of the cups, filled up the cup with boiling water, and set the saucer over it. Then the sand-glass was turned. And whilst the tea was steeping, Mr. Lynthorne paused with his eye on the running sand: when the last grain fell, the tea would be ready for tasting.

Greville seized the moment.

"Father, there is another ship steaming up the river; perhaps Mr. Raynham is on board."

The news was as welcome as Greville had expected. Mr. Lynthorne heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"Tell the boy to row down and meet it and inquire," he answered hastily, for the sand was out.

Away went Greville, proud of his commission. The boy he was to find was Mr. Lynthorne's Chinese servant. Every merchant keeps a boy, as he is called. Whatever the age of the Chinaman who fills the post, he is always called the boy. He does no rough work, but he sees that all the coolies under him do theirs. He goes with his master everywhere, takes good care of everything belonging to him, saves him all sorts of trouble, and never gives him any. So good a servant as a Chinese "boy" it would be difficult to find in any other country.

"Where is Pao?" asked Greville of one of the Chinese clerks. His father looked up from his tea-cup, and pointed to the door of an inner room, where he kept his money.

Pao, who had found everything "east and west" in his master's sanctum, was putting it to rights.

Everything belonging to Mr. Lynthorne got east and west, as Pao called it, during the hurry of the tea-market.

Greville delivered his father's message.

"Can do," answered Pao decidedly, as he glided about in his long white robe and soft slippers. He

was setting up the heavy ledgers, which filled the shelves over the merchant's desk. In the middle of the room stood a strong chopping-block. A small, well-sharpened hatchet lay on it, ready for use. In the corner behind it there was a high pile of glittering lumps. Each lump weighed about seven pounds, and was cast in the shape of a shoe. Purses and cash-boxes are of no use in China. That heap on the floor was Mr. Lynthorne's hoard of sycee silver, which he had got ready to pay for the tea he was buying in such quantities. On the other side of the room there were rows of strong pegs, prepared for the copper money, which lay on the floor beneath in a mountainous pile.

"All to be hangee up," said Pao. "Helpee, Master Greville, and we go row down river."

Greville's eyes sparkled with delight at the proposal.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE SAMPAN.

GLAD to have found something to do at last, Greville set to work in earnest. The copper coins or copper cash, as they are called, are the only money the poor people in China will take in payment. To get cash enough was the worry of Mr. Lynthorne's life. He had just procured a fresh supply, and Pao wanted to hang it up on the pegs before he went.

Twenty-five of these cash are equal to one of our pennies. Five pounds' worth would overload a boat. They are made with a hole in the middle of the coin, so that they can be threaded on long strings. It was these strings of cash Pao wanted to hang up before he went. They were very heavy to lift, and Greville was soon so tired that he thought his arms would drop off. He rested himself by dusting the money-scales. They were a ponderous affair, fit for a grocer's shop, we should say. But they required careful dusting, for the sparkling flour sifted over them was all pure silver. Greville gathered this into a little bowl

He was thinking how very nice it must be to live in England, where money was no trouble,—where nobody thought of chopping off a bit of silver every time there was a bill to pay, and weighing out the right quantity, as his father was forced to do.

But his reflections were cut short by a message from Mr. Lynthorne telling them to make haste.

Pao spread his fan, Greville snatched up his broad hat and puggaree, and away they went. The careful Pao had hung three or four strings of cash round his neck, to pay a boatman, and if necessary lend a few to the new arrival, who he hoped would return with them.

"Young barbarian no talkee pidgin," observed Pao; "he no savoy what I say. He savoy you, Master Greville."

"If he does talk Portuguese, which is not at all likely," retorted Greville, "he would not know that *savoy* means *sabo*, 'I understand.' You jumble up all sorts of words in your pidgin, Pao. You are quite right to take me with you, I am sure."

Greville spoke very decidedly, but in his heart he was not quite sure his father intended him to go too; but it was of no use to interrupt him again. He ran on by Pao's side, wondering whether he could persuade his father to let him help in the office. He felt quite certain he could chop the silver, if he could not do anything else; and whilst Pao was looking out for a boat, he tried the strength of his arm by dealing a

blow at a stone with a little stick. The stick snapped in his hand, and the stone went rolling into the water with a dash and a splash.

A little boat floating idly by the river-bank rocked frightfully. Its owner had just unloaded its cargo of tea, and had left it in his wife's care. She shrieked out in alarm, for fear her boat should be upset, and began scolding Greville at the top of her voice.

He knew well enough she was blaming his carelessness, although he could not understand a word she was saying. It made the poor boy tremble, for five tame cormorants, perched on the edge of the boat, began to flap their wings and scream in concert. A big perch leaped up in the water. The biggest bird made a dart forward with open beak. Greville thought it was coming straight at him, and put up his hands to shield his eyes. As he stepped back hurriedly to escape the bird's attack, he stumbled over the naked feet of the old boatman, Ting, who was returning to his wife's assistance.

"I am so sorry," stammered Greville. "It was an accident. I hope I have not done any mischief."

A hooting, pelting crowd might have gathered round the foreign boy in another moment, but for Pao; for all the Chinese have an inborn dislike to foreigners, which a little irritation quickly chafes into positive anger. Pao turned his complacent face, beaming with smiles, and dropped a single cash from the strings he was carrying into the boatman's hand.

Although it was worth only a fifth part of one of our English farthings, the effect was magical.

"Humph!" ejaculated old Ting, and "Humph" from the lips of a Chinaman means so much. The look and tone with which it is uttered make it express volumes. Old Ting was now their very humble servant, delighted to row them in his sampan to meet the English ship. He explained to Greville, as well as he could, that his cormorants were after the fish, which, like many a Chinese fisherman, he had trained them to catch.

Pao called to a Chinese constable to take the number of the boat before they entered it. This was a customary precaution, for there are many thieves among the river-boatmen. If anything went wrong, the old man could easily be found and made to give an account of it.

There were about twenty Chinese constables always marching up and down the English Concession to keep order. The Chinese government had sent them to protect the English merchants. A box of wooden soldiers would have been almost as good a guard, for if any disturbance did arise, they were safe to run away. But to-day the crowd was in high good-humour, laughing and chattering over a prosperous market.

Old Ting had laid a little plank from his boat to the shore, and taking Greville's hand, he led him carefully across, Pao following with a very grand air.

The boat or sampan was about the size of a Thames wherry. There was a little awning over one end, looking like a gipsy's tent, under which the angry wife had retreated.

"No mindee her," whispered Pao, stroking Greville's pale cheek. "All clatter and pout. No can see."

With this assurance Greville recovered his equanimity, and began to look around him.

At the other end of the boat, in the bows, there were two large holes: one was a kind of tank in which Ting threw his fish as he caught them, and the other a sort of cupboard. In the latter he kept his household gear.

The boat was poor Ting's home. He and his wife, with their two little children, lived in it, small as it was. It was remarkably clean for China, where dirt and bad smells unfortunately abound. On one edge the cormorants were perched in a row. Greville could see they had all large rings fastened round their necks, to which a long string was tied, so that they could dart down into the water to catch the fish, but could not fly away from their master.

"Inside fixee. No can see," laughed Pao merrily, as he shook the strings before Greville's eyes, to convince him that his fright was quite unnecessary.

Feeling more than half ashamed of himself, Greville bit his lip with vexation; for old Ting's black eyes were dancing with amusement, and the angry wife laughed right out. To make the matter worse, a little mon-

key of a boy crawled out from under his mother's long skirt, and began to point at him, and laugh with all his might. As they had never seen a foreign boy before, Ting was calling to them to notice the ridiculous sight of a boy's head all covered with hair, like growing grass.

This was horribly disconcerting. Greville thought the best thing he could do was to join in the laughing chorus, even if it were at his own expense.

But Pao was considerably annoyed. He liked to think his master was a personage of great importance, who ought to be treated with as much respect as the brother of their *taotai*, or governor. He was just about to strike the little yellow head that was tumbling on the floor with the handle of his fan, when Greville caught his arm and stopped him. Old Ting's round face was one broad grin of pleasure. That little head was the very joy of his heart.

The young Chinese scrambled to his feet, and ran to hide himself behind a row of beautiful flowers in pots, which were ranged on the opposite side of the boat, balancing the cormorants.

"He will be over!" exclaimed Greville. "O Pao, what have you done?"

"Hab um safe. No can see," repeated Pao, undisturbed by the child's apparent peril.

What was there for Greville to see? He began to look about him more closely; then he discovered the laughing black-eyed child was made safe in his float-

ing nursery by a long line tied round his waist, to which a very heavy stone was made fast at the other end, so that if he had a fall into the water, he could be pulled out again in a moment. Perhaps these frequent duckings helped to make him so exceptionally clean. Greville thought it must be so. How he would make Cornelia laugh when he got home!

But Pao was really scandalized at the behaviour of the fisherman's family, and drawing himself up with a grand air of offended dignity, he gravely asked old Ting "if he savoy his master was top-side tea-judgin' man;" adding confidentially his private belief that he was cousin to the Queen of England herself.

"Nonsense, Pao!" exclaimed Greville. "What would father say if he could hear you?"

The impression Pao's words had created was only deepened by Greville's disclaimer, which was quite in accordance with Chinese etiquette, and so went for nothing. Ting, with all a Chinaman's reverence for dignitaries, now insisted upon proper respect being shown to the young foreigner. He made his little son knock his head three times on the floor of the boat before Greville's feet. Then he held up his oar and gave a sign to his wife, who pushed the fishing-net aside and lifted up a little girl who had hidden herself beneath it when the strangers crossed the plank.

Little girls in England are often told that they should be seen and not heard; but well-behaved little

girls in China are taught that it is a disgrace to be either seen or heard, so they usually run and hide themselves at the sound of a strange footstep.

She was a little older than her brother, and her black hair was cut in a fringe above her eyebrows.

She gave such a piteous moan of pain as her mother lifted her up, it went to Greville's heart. Her little feet were so crippled she knew not how to stand alone. Yet they made her knock her head on the deck before him, as her brother had done. Her long pinafore almost covered the distorted toes—twisted back under the sole of her foot, and bound and tied with strings of silk. It was a sight Greville thought he never could forget.

"Is that your way of making courtesies?" he said. "Oh, pray don't do it to me if it hurts you so much. —What is the matter with her, Pao?"

Pao leaned over him and made him understand in a low aside. The mother had just bound up the little creature's feet. She would get used to it by-and-by. It would not do to let a little dust-pan and hand-brush run about like a boy. It would not be respectable.

"Do they call you little dust-pan and hand-brush?' asked Greville, tickled in spite of his indignation on her behalf. "What a name!"

"No, no," said Ting; "I give her pretty English name, 'Old-ah-you.' Dust-pan and hand-brush, that we call all little girls."

It now became so difficult to old Ting to guide his

boat through the crowd of junks, any further conversation was impossible. Only a Chinese boatman could have escaped a collision. His wife screamed to the cormorants, who drew back obediently. The luckless little dust-pan and hand-brush did nothing but tumble down in her vain attempt to walk back to the bit of mat on which she was lying when her mother uncovered her.

"She will fall over into the river!" cried Greville.

But no one seemed to think it of much consequence if she did.

Pao recommended them to tie a big gourd-skin in front of her pinafore, to keep her afloat if she fell.

The mother said she would, but gourds were dear.

Greville guessed the meaning of her reply, and pulling a handful of cash off one of Pao's strings, offered them to her. He knew his father would say that was quite right.

Pao, with his fan slanted over his eyes, was pointing out the ship he had come to meet. Not the paddle-steamer riding at anchor on the sluggish yellow stream, which he called "outside-walkee-can-see," but the screw-steamer which was puffing its way towards them. This he designated "inside-walkee-no-can-see."

Greville was on the tiptoe of expectation as the little sampan threaded its way between its more important neighbours, until it was within hail of the advancing steamer.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVED AT LAST.

PAO'S inquiries were answered by a stentorian English voice. The speaker, supposing the little party in the sampan had come to offer their services in the unlading of his ship, roared out, "Too plenty coolie," and pointed to the shaven heads already swarming on to the deck in hopes of earning a few cash. But his manner soon changed when he found they were not more coolies seeking work, but had brought a message from the English *charsee.* When he caught sight of Greville's English face under the white coil of his ample puggaree, it elicited a broad smile of pleasure.

"Who are you, my little lad?" he demanded.

"The only English boy in Hankow," answered Greville cheerily.

"Then come on board, and welcome; you will find this Mr. Raynham eating his dinner in the captain's cabin."

But Pao, who never lost sight of his master's interests, demurred to this proceeding, and held back

Greville with one of his most significant "Humphs," making him understand that the master, who was always in a hurry, like all true Englishmen, had only sent them to ask if his new pen-pidgin man was on board.

"Takee answer, walkee back!" he added, with great emphasis.

"Take him with us," suggested Greville. "Wouldn't that be jolly?"

Pao chuckled over the idea. "Good, good!" he repeated; "*boo-oo y-ah!*" (bravo).

"Yes, good," answered a laughing voice behind the boatswain. "Now, I think the best answer to return to Mr. Lynthorne is myself in person."

Young Raynham, having heard the echo of his own name, had hurried away from the mess-table to ascertain who was inquiring for him.

"Jump in, Mr. Raynham," urged Greville, in a flutter of excitement, almost frightened at his own temerity. "Oh, do come back with us! Father will be so pleased to see you, I know."

"Wait five minutes, and I'll be with you," retorted the same brisk voice; for it could hardly yet be said that they had seen the speaker.

It was a summary ending to a journey of eleven thousand miles; but it was the best way of atoning for his tardy appearance, so, at least, young Raynham thought. A brief colloquy with the captain satisfied him that his luggage would be safely landed in due time. When he took his seat in the boat by Greville's

side, he heard with a prick of conscience what an amount of work his non-appearance had thrown on Mr. Lynthorne. Did he know that his expected clerk had lingered a whole fortnight at Hong-Kong, enjoying the free-handed hospitality of the English residents there; and then another ten days at Shanghai, just to break the tedious journey, and recruit himself before he entered upon his new post? Raynham was the younger brother of a friend of one of the tea-ship captains. He had just left school, when he heard by chance that a Hankow merchant was willing to give three hundred a year, with board and residence, to any young fellow of good character and good abilities who would come out to him, to keep his English accounts.

The offer was a tempting one. Raynham caught at it; borrowed his passage-money of a well-to-do friend, promising faithfully to repay it with his first year's salary; said good-bye to home and country with a light heart; and started, as he assured them, to make his fortune. Nothing could be easier. Scraps of note-paper were covered with his calculations as to how much he could lay by annually out of such an income. His careless indifference soon threw off the little uneasiness Greville's words had occasioned, and he regained his sense of enjoyment in the novel scene.

It was marvellous to note the ease with which old Ting guided his boat through the crowded waters. It was pure merriment to listen to the strange cries and ceaseless gabble in an unknown tongue, and

turn for explanation to the bright, intelligent face of the English boy, who was watching so earnestly to see what sort of an impression the first glimpse of Hankow would create in the mind of the new-comer. Was it good, or bad?

Everybody had been saying the raw English lad would be sick of China before six months were over.

Pao pointed proudly to the city of his birth. Raynham stared a little blankly at three acres of roofs, all of the same shape, and looking in the distance all of the same size, so closely huddled together that there seemed no room for street or square within its walls. Outside the walls he could see a few straight rows of willows, numberless ditches, with here and there a drove of pigs. Now and then, as they drew nearer to the bank of the river, he could perceive a flimsy bit of bamboo fence, looking as if a puff of wind might blow it away, or a few mud and wattle huts, windowless and chimneyless. Doorways, indeed, there were, to which no door had ever yet been fitted. The very magpies perched upon their low roofs looked down upon them with disdain. What was Greville saying? A Chinese village. Impossible! Those tumble-down hovels the homes of human beings! Raynham did not believe his young companion.

"Yes, but they are," persisted Greville; "and if we ran across those bean-fields to look, we should find them crowded. I begin to think old Ting is better off in his sampan after all. Don't be frightened, Mr.

Raynham ; we do not live in a Chinese city or village either—nobody could, they are so dirty. That is our hong," he added, pointing to the stately homes of the English merchants, half hidden in the fairy foliage of fern and palm and feathery bamboo. The natural beauty of the spot was heightened by the force of contrast. Raynham's exclamation set Greville's anxious heart at rest.

"He likes the look of places, Pao," he whispered.

"No can say yet," answered the cautious boy, who had already set down young Raynham as "too plenty lazy for us." He counted the cash into Ting's hand, and guided the English lad across the narrow plank, up the landing-stairs, along the park-like avenue, to his master's gate.

Raynham's eyes were fixed on something facing the end of the avenue, which looked strangely like a gigantic painted mantle-piece. "What is that?" he asked.

"The city gate," answered Greville, as they entered the portico of his father's hong. Raynham saw that the building itself was slight and inexpensive; but inside, every room and passage was so large and lofty that the effect was approaching the magnificent. The high, wide windows and folding-doors stood open. The floors were beautifully stained, and partly covered with bright-tinted ratan mattings. Carpets and window-curtains were things unknown to Greville and his sister.

The rooms were furnished with large bamboo chairs of every imaginable shape likely to afford rest with coolness. Amongst them were dotted numberless little tables, so light that they could be moved by a touch. Plenty of brightly-painted fans were scattered about the rooms, not for ornament, but for use. Raynham was struck with the lovely cabinets of carved wood and lacquer-work. He was quite prepared for the abundance of china ornaments, some of them so lovely, and some as detestably hideous. Overhead, a succession of huge, white, oblong fans stretched completely across the ceiling. They were moving noiselessly, with a slow and graceful wave, being worked by pulleys and ropes outside. Puffs of cool air were wafted through the darkened rooms, diffusing the sweet perfumes of the lovely flowers with which English ladies in the tropics delight to adorn their houses.

"Where am I?" thought Raynham. "Has some scene in the 'Arabian Nights' suddenly become a reality?"

Cornelia rose up from the midst of her dolls, and came to meet them; but slackened her steps with increasing shyness when she perceived the stranger. Pao conducted Raynham to the suite of rooms prepared for him—sitting-room, bed-room, and bath-room, for his exclusive use. The recent schoolboy was a little inflated; he rose decidedly in his own estimation. He spoke to Pao as if he were a "somebody," who expected to be obeyed—a second master.

Pao took him at his own valuation, and treated him with the same deferential attention he showed to Mr. Lynthorne; whilst Greville and Cornelia vied with each other in anticipating his wishes. It was such a responsibility to receive Mr. Raynham all by themselves. Pao assured them Mr. Raynham would want to rest a little while in his own room; so Greville ran off to tell his father.

Mr. Lynthorne received the news with a smile of satisfaction. "Amuse him as well as you can until I am at liberty," he said; "tell Pao to look after his comfort in every way. Yes, give Mr. Raynham my compliments, and say I am engaged with business, and cannot see him before dinner."

Greville returned to deliver his father's message, and found the rest which Pao had recommended to the young stranger had ended in sleep. When he roused up at last, the heat of the day was passing; and a stroll round the garden and tennis-court whiled away another hour. Raynham's energy was reviving; he proposed to Greville to extend their ramble, as he said he should like to look about him; and taking Pao for a guide, they started.

Cornelia's walks were usually limited to the safe precincts of the English Concession. The scene which opened before them, when they passed the last of the Chinese policemen who guarded it, was almost as new to her as to Raynham. Not a tree was to be seen—no, not so much as a single hedgerow. Scarcely a

bush had been spared by the indefatigable toilers who owned them; not one waste patch of ground in all that wide expanse where a bramble or nettle could grow of its own wild will. Every inch of soil was cultivated. Field after field of rice and beans, now and then diversified by patches of millet and corn, met their astonished eyes. No road anywhere that we English could call a road; only never-ending foot-paths dividing every field, so narrow that Greville and Cornelia could just walk hand in hand. These paths were raised, and on either side was a water-course, fed by the river. Sometimes this watercourse might have been called a small canal, but it was often nothing more than a running ditch. Yes, the young English stranger began to realize that he was in China: a nation ruled by the bamboo, in the hands of the magistrate, as if it were one vast school; and a country cultivated so closely and so carefully that it looked like some giant's kitchen-garden.

CHAPTER IV.

THROUGH THE RICE-FIELDS.

THE little party paused at one of the numerous crossings which intersected this network of path and ditch to look around them.

The sweet scent of the bean-fields partly overcame the detestable exhalations from the endless heaps of manure.

Every field had its patch of cabbages and garlic, and every garden its row of tea-plants, with their white camellia flowers. Droves of pigs and flocks of ducks were feeding on the fallows, but there was not a single cow in the whole district, not a sheep or a pony. The hoe and the bucket had it all their own way. Even the plough and the spade were only used occasionally. Not a weed in one of the many gardens which surrounded and almost concealed the low mud huts scattered in every direction.

Two Chinamen stood on the path, with a bucket slung between them, which they dipped in the stream, and with a dexterous swing emptied its contents on the thirsty cabbages. Far across, at the opposite

angle of the path, a single coolie, with fan aslant over his bare head, was working a water-wheel. It was furnished with steps, like a treadmill, and as he stepped it to a monotonous chanting cry, he sent the water splashing and dashing over his waving grain. Raynham was so intent upon these novel proceedings he did not understand that a wheelbarrow was coming up behind them.

"Full sail!" cried Greville, as he pulled Cornelia into one of the many little bridges which led into the fields.

"Wheelbarrows and boats do everything here, Mr. Raynham, between them. Horses and carts are unknown; so the barrows and boats grow neighbourly, and lend each other a sail or a wheel, as occasion requires."

Raynham thought the boy was trying to hoax him, and did not move.

"Look, see!" shouted Pao, as he almost pushed him out of the way, as the barrow was driven past, with its big sail fluttering, and its driver grunting like the pigs which were feeding in the stubbles.

Raynham shook with laughter. To his companions it was an everyday sight; but the amusement it afforded him was nothing to the merriment his own appearance was exciting in the man on the wheel, whose shouts were attracting the attention of his comrades in the fields around.

Greville and Cornelia had stepped back precipitately into a growing crop of beans. Out came the

owner, beckoning to them to come on. Careful, as all the Chinese are, to prevent the least waste, he thought himself well repaid for any damage they might do by a good look at the *fung yang* (foreign frights). Up started boys in every direction.

Cornelia was almost lost among the sweet bean-flowers, and little more than Greville's head was visible to the grinning faces that kept multiplying on every hand; but Raynham, on his elevated path, was singularly conspicuous.

Many Englishmen have found the rude laughter of the lower orders in China, and their very personal remarks, sufficiently disconcerting; but to Raynham, who was utterly unprepared for anything of the kind, it was positively exasperating. He was at that awkward age between a man and a boy when, above all things, to be laughed at is hateful; and he felt himself to be the butt of a jeering crowd of hideous, yellow-faced foreigners. On he stalked with stolid indifference, trying to ignore it. They were close to the object of their walk, the great tea-garden of a mandarin.

Pao was suavely defending the narrowness of the Chinese paths.

"Room for bucket, room for man," he was saying. "What for wastee ground in largee room?"

Suddenly his companion bolted down a side-path, unable longer to endure the irritating laughter behind him.

"Pao, Pao! he is off to the city!" exclaimed Greville in dismay.

"Likee streetee better than fieldee," returned the boy, readjusting his fan as he started in pursuit.

Cornelia was running after him, but Greville held her back. "You forget, dear, father says you and I must never go to Hankow—never go inside the gates."

"Oh, I know," she answered, stopping short on the curve of the bridge, and letting the large white sun-shade which she carried rest on her shoulder, as she looked after the retreating figures.

The heat of the day was abating. A cooler breeze from the river just lifted the dark curls that clustered over her broad forehead, and brought a faint rose-tint into her usually pale cheeks. The slender figure, the quick, graceful movement, so new to the eyes of the Chinaman, changed the grin of derision to a broad smile of admiration for the little English girl.

The owner of the bean-field held out his arms to invite her to come a little nearer.

A yellow face peered out of every tea-bush in the mandarin's garden, and the laughter and gabble around her grew deafening. One of the big coolies with the bucket, for the pure pleasure of lifting her up, offered to jump her across the ditch, and set her on the path which Raynham had chosen. But Greville was resolute.

"Father says we shall catch a fever if we go into

the city. He says we must never go into Hankow unless he takes us," he persisted.

The coolie understood "pidgin," and shouted after Pao. Every Chinaman considers absolute obedience to a father as a lifelong duty. The perplexed "boy" rubbed his back, not liking to leave his master's children alone in the fields, and yet certain that Raynham would lose himself in the labyrinthine streets of the city if he did not fetch him back. He recognized an old neighbour at work in his garden, and asking him to keep an eye upon Greville and his sister until he came back, he hurried on.

The gardener used his hoe as a leaping-pole, and coming up behind Cornelia, grasped her round the waist with his dirty hands, and swung her over the ditch into the safer precincts of a fallow rice-field, where a large flock of ducks were picking up their own living.

Greville was not slow to follow, for the look on his sister's face was enough.

Once inside the circling ditch, they found it very pleasant. There is no better fun in the world than watching a flock of Chinese ducks, who exhibit a degree of intelligence altogether unknown to their European brothers. They obey their keeper's whistle like a pack of dogs, and march out every day to find their own dinners. In a country like China, where there are three crops in the year, there is always a fallow somewhere to be found. But now the sun

was setting; their keeper, a little boy of ten or twelve, was trying to collect them into a close phalanx, amidst much quacking and flapping of wings. There was plenty of amusement, also, in watching the tea-gatherers on the other side of the opposite ditch. Men, women, and children, each with a basket slung round their necks by a leather strap, in which they had been gathering leaves through all the sunny hours, were scattered over the gardens. Some were busy still around the drying-pans, which are heated over a gentle fire. There was a long row of furnaces, built across one end of the garden, and cast-iron pans were fixed over them, at a particular slant. Others were shaking the half-dried leaves in sieves; while others, again, were already beginning to pack away the tea in baskets for the night.

More were spreading the leaves which had been gathered last upon large sieves, where they could continue drying all night; but the best tea, which is gathered first, must be dried and packed in the same day. Every one was intent. Every one seemed to know so well what he had to do that there was no confusion. Sieves and baskets passed from hand to hand with such order and rapidity that Greville and Cornelia stood fascinated.

Suddenly they saw the little duck-driver leave his flock, which he had had such trouble in getting into order, and run back to the ditch which separated them from the tea-garden. He hung over it crying. He

stretched his arms towards the water, as if trying to snatch at something beyond his reach.

"Oh, poor boy!" said Cornelia; "he has lost something in the water."

"I'll run and help him get it out!" cried Greville. Cornelia followed. They came up behind the little fellow. He looked very dirty. His blue tunic was ragged and outgrown. His feet were bare, and the few locks of hair which were left on the back of his head were braided into a neat cue. A whistle was hanging from his neck, and in his hand he held a long bamboo. He looked round piteously as they came near, and pointed with the bamboo to a tuft of coarse grass growing on the opposite bank. Then he threw himself on the ground and sobbed more bitterly than ever.

Greville picked up the bamboo the boy had let fall, and leaning over the ditch put the tall grass aside. Oh, horror! It was a baby lying half hidden in the muddy slime—a naked baby!

"Is it dead?" said Cornelia. Greville did not reply. He touched it gently with the end of the bamboo on its tiny shoulder. A faint, low moan assured him it was still alive.

Up started the boy and listened. Yes, there it was again—that feeble moan. Cornelia's heart gave a great heave; she grew white as ashes.

"Can't we get it out?" she gasped.

"Hold me hard," said Greville, giving one hand to

the Chinese boy; and stepping down into the water. he tried to reach the baby in vain.

"Give me the bamboo!" he exclaimed.

"No, no!" cried Cornelia, who was looking wildly round her for help. "Let me fetch those men. You will only push it in."

"Let him fetch them," returned Greville; "he can tell them what is the matter, and we cannot.—Here," he continued, taking the boy by the arm; and pointing to the men at work in the fields, he tried to make him understand to go and fetch some one. But the boy only shook his head, and stood stupidly still as before. The flutter of a blue robe among the long rows of tea-shrubs beyond the opposite bank gave hope that help was near. Greville shouted with all his might; Cornelia waved her handkerchief high above her head. She was taller than the tea-shrubs: that must be seen. It was seen; Greville's shout was heard. Two women carrying a packing-basket between them were coming their way.

"Look, look!" implored Cornelia.

"Help, help!" cried Greville, pointing to the child as it lay huddled together in the tangle of grass and slime, which had just saved it from rolling down the slippery bank into the ditch below.

The women turned their heads, glanced down at the half-dead infant, and then, with a "Humph" and a laugh, which sounded like the rasping of a nutmeg-grater, went their ways.

"The wretches!" exclaimed Greville, stamping in his indignant anger. "They saw it and would not stop."

The duck-driver looked as if he knew from the first how useless it was to call for help.

"Can't we get round to the other side?" asked Cornelia breathlessly. "There is a little bridge at the corner."

Yes, Greville could see it too. He tied his sister's handkerchief to the end of the bamboo and stuck it in the soft mud to mark the spot. Then they set off, and ran as fast as they could to the little foot-bridge Cornelia had discovered. The poor duck-driver put his hands before his face, as if he thought all help was over, and they too were leaving him.

Breathless and panting with the speed at which they had come, Greville and his sister rushed in between the clustering shrubs, with their myrtle-like leaves and snowy flowers. They had entered that part of the garden where the leaves had not yet been gathered. The bushes were between three and four feet high and about as many apart, so that they could easily walk through any part of the shrubbery without doing mischief. To-morrow the bushes through which they were hurrying would all be cleared. The pickers were already leaving the ground as the sun sank low in the west; but the driers and packers were still hard at work at the other end of the garden. The ground on which the tea-shrubs were planted

gradually rose, and the canal surrounding it was broader and clearer. In the midst of the bushes there was a large circular mound, made in three tiers or terraces.

"We have no business to come in here," said Greville; "but if we can only make them understand why, nobody would mind. I wish we could see some one, just to ask."

"Let us run up that hill and look if there is any one near," suggested Cornelia.

"That hill!" repeated Greville, catching hold of her dress; "that is the family grave. Can't you see the coffins on the top? If we, being foreigners, were to go near it, there would be no end of fuss. We must be careful."

"Yes, yes," she reiterated; "but there is somebody coming."

CHAPTER V.

RESCUED.

CORNELIA was right. The overseer of the garden had caught sight of her white dress through the dark leaves, and was hurrying towards them, concluding some loitering picker was still at work. To gather leaves, even for the poorest kinds of tea, was useless after sundown. He called out to them to stop. Greville, who had learned a little of Chinese manners from Pao, went up to him deferentially, pressing the palms of his hands together, which in their eyes is equivalent to saying, "I have the honour to be your obedient humble servant." This is the approved way in which one Chinese gentleman addresses another.

The overseer, whose broad, good-tempered Chinese face was beaming with admiration at the sight of Cornelia, understood enough "pidgin" to comprehend that something was in the ditch.

He bade them take a "good look, see," and even stood for two whole minutes watching Cornelia's slim figure tripping by her brother's side. Of course he

kept his eye upon them as he saw them rushing up and down by the side of the ditch looking for the spot where they had seen the baby.

"Oh, those senseless English!" he exclaimed,—"always on the go, as if a dozen fierce bat-cockroaches were stinging them past bearing. Just look at those children—and one a girl!"

Without a thought of the impression she was creating, Cornelia knelt down by the water's edge.

"Here it is!" she cried, almost joyfully, as she flung down the sunshade and pulled off her long white gloves. "But oh, Grevie, we are too late!" she added, her tone changing suddenly to one of inexpressible sadness. She got up softly and slipped her hand into her brother's. "The baby is not dead, is it?"

Greville drew a deep breath, and without replying began to descend the bank slowly and carefully. He planted his foot firmly against a stone, as he stooped to lift up the baby. One little slip and both would have been rolling in the slimy water. It was hard to keep his balance with the little creature in his arms; harder still to turn round, but he did it.

Cornelia took the baby from him. Never had she seen such a tiny child before. It was scarcely bigger than her own wax doll. Poor little innocent! Oh how dirty and damp and cold! She sat down under the nearest tea-shrub and cuddled it closely to her.

Greville was by her side.

"Give me your handkerchief, dear," she whispered, and she put it over the little head like a shawl.

"That is not half enough to get it warm," interposed her brother, pulling off his jacket and wrapping it round the stiffened limbs. Cornelia hugged the baby closer and closer. But there was no movement in the tiny frame; whether it were alive or dead they could not tell.

"*Chin-chin*" (Good-bye), said the duck-boy, knocking his head on the ground three times; but whether he were saying his prayers in gratitude to Heaven, or whether he intended to thank them for trying to save the child, they could not tell.

"*Chin-chin*," echoed Greville, as the boy went back to his ducks; and the brother and sister turned to each other.

"Where shall we find the baby's mother?" said Greville. "I wonder if that duck-boy has sense enough to go and look for her."

"It must have come from some of the huts we passed; I wonder how it could get here," was Cornelia's reply. But it would never do to waste time in conjectures. They ran across with the baby to the busy packers, who might know better than they did if the poor little child were really dead.

The wood-fire under the nearest drying-pan had already died away to a heap of smouldering ashes, and the man who had been minding it was clearing up for the night. Their work in the fields was

nearly done, and time was as precious in the mandarin's tea-garden as in Mr. Lynthorne's office. Greville ran from one bare-headed, pig-tailed Chinaman to another, trying to make them understand by word and gesture what had happened.

Cornelia had seated herself by the glowing ashes. "We do not quite know what we ought to do, but warmth must be good," she thought, as she rocked the baby in her arms, looking anxiously across the fields. But no Pao was in sight.

What an age it seemed as she sat there, gazing at the tiny yellow face resting on her arm, so like an india-rubber ball! Just a little slit for the mouth, and two still more tiny slits for the eyes, with a sprinkling of black down on the top of its head. But like all Chinese children, the baby had the dearest little hands and feet imaginable. As she hung over it in cold despair, the tiny mouth slightly puckered, and it gave the slightest of infantine sneezes. It could scarcely be called a sound, but it sent a thrill of joy to Cornelia's heart.

"Greville, Greville!" she called softly, "let us hurry home with it to Marweh, to my *ama* (nurse). Come along. It is useless to wait for Mr. Raynham. We may save the baby yet, if we make haste."

There was a good deal of laughter and gabble amongst the coolies as Greville pointed to the baby and asked them where its *moochin* (mother) could be found.

No one seemed to know or care.

The twilight shadows were lengthening as the brother and sister hurried back across the fields. There was no fear of losing their way, for the tall trees of the English Concession were a landmark that could not be mistaken. On they went, scarcely noticing the beautiful wild birds flitting over ditch and fallow as they returned to their nests, or the croaking frogs and leaping grasshoppers; no, not even the horrid bat-cockroaches clinging in Greville's puggaree, ready to stab him with their formidable stings.

Marweh, like everything English or Chinese, had come out of doors to enjoy the cool twilight breeze, and was just managing to hobble round the garden, when she caught sight of the children returning, and held open the gate. Her dress was so similar to Pao's, that it was not easy to tell in the distance whether it were a man or a woman waiting for them. But when she leaned forward, and they saw her head with its thick rolls of coarse black hair, they knew her in a moment, and called to her to come and look at what they had found.

But poor Marweh, who was so crippled that she had to be driven in a wheel-barrow, like most Chinese women, if she wanted to go out, only laughed and shook her head. "Too plenty late. No dressee for *chow-chow*," she returned.

"Had your own chow-chow, Marweh?" asked Greville

—"chow-chow" being the one comprehensive Chinese word for a family meal, be it dinner or supper.

The Chinese themselves take their chow-chow only twice a day, and look down upon the English for wanting it at least four times. Chinese temper and patience can hold out against every provocation, except being called away from their rice. A coolie will do anything to please his master but leave his dinner. No consideration in the world would induce him to come away before it was finished.

Cornelia repeated Greville's inquiry with breathless eagerness. Both knew Marweh's willingness to attend to the poor baby depended upon her reply. But fortunately for it, Marweh had had her chow-chow, and Mr. Raynham and Pao had not got home before them. If chow-chow in the dining-room had been waiting an hour or more, it did not matter. "What did anything matter when an infant's life was at stake?" urged Greville warmly.

Cornelia opened the folds of Greville's jacket, and showed the ama the tiny yellow face. "O Marweh, tell us what to do—how to take care of it until we can find its mother."

"Humph!" ejaculated Marweh; "what will the missisee say to dat? No hab um here. She no wantee little dust-pans. Put it down, dearee. Come and dressee."

"Put it down, Marweh! Do you know what you are saying?" demanded Greville. "Mother will never

forgive you if you do not do everything you can to save it."

"Never," repeated Cornelia; "we know better than you do, Marweh, what mother will say. We must warm it and feed it. Come and help us."

Marweh's face was contorted with laughter as she hobbled after them, looking more than ever like some great baboon. Cornelia's anxiety to find the baby's mother was amusing her mightily.

"I savoy it was baby's moochin threw it away. She no wantee baby back. Got too plenty," suggested Marweh.

The idea was repelled with horror by Cornelia; but Greville, who knew more of Chinese ways than his sister, was half afraid Marweh might be right.

"Never mind," he returned; "we will see about that by-and-by." He was trying to speak like his father.

The ama, although she was really afraid Mrs. Lynthorne would be vexed, gave in. Cornelia rose to the emergency: she held the baby the tighter. "If we might keep it always, I should love it. Look, Grevie, it is opening its eyes! I am not going to leave it to Marweh. I don't want any dinner; I could not eat if I tried. You tell father all about it whilst I put it to bed."

She walked by the open doors of the dining-room straight into her own apartment—once their nursery, but now devoted to her exclusive use. It was large

and lofty, so was the bedroom beyond; as cool and quiet as a mother's assiduous care could make them. Mrs. Lynthorne had provided everything for her darling's comfort during her absence except a warm wrap. Everything worthy the name at that season of the year was stowed away out of the reach of the bat-cockroaches—those pests of daily life in China, which fly, run, leap, and tumble into everything imaginable, making sad havoc wherever they are found, especially among books and clothes. Cornelia could not get at anything warmer than silk or muslin. She paused by the mosquito-curtains of her bed, considering. Well, her bed was only a thin grass mat, with the hardest of bolsters and thinnest of sheets. She turned to her doll's cradle. Alas! it was all too short for the tiny stranger.

Greville put his head in at the door, to deliver his parting charge, "Be sure you wrap the baby up, and keep it warm, as quick as ever you can. It is all we can do."

"Yes, yes," she answered desperately. "Marweh is looking for something soft; I wish she would be quicker."

"There are lots of pieces of wadding left in the package-case which came from England last; would not they do?" asked Greville.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

THE plight in which young Raynham returned to the Concession fully justified Mr. Lynthorne's interdict.

The nauseous effluvia from decaying rubbish heaps, the poisonous exhalations from many a stagnant ditch, the choking atmosphere of the narrow, labyrinthine streets, sent him back with something worse than a headache.

He flung himself down on one of the long bamboo chairs by the window of the dining-room, and turned his back upon the well-spread table, unable to endure the sight or thought of food. The blaze of light from the lamps seemed unbearable. The cool twilight breeze, and the growing gloom in the garden, just made life endurable. He was longing for Mr. Lynthorne's appearance, that he might escape to his own rooms, and go to bed. Yet every added moment made him feel more and more unequal to the interview; he pushed his chair through the open window. On the veranda he might really be at rest, watching the dim

outlines of enormous ferns and huge-leaved orchids, growing beneath a waving mass of drooping, feathery bamboos and giant palms, where the wild doves were cooing a fond good-night to their drowsy mates. All around him was the sweet breath of frangipanni and magnolia. Even the multitudinous sounds from the overcrowded city seemed subdued, when a chorus of frogs awoke by the river, jarring on his nerves, like the yapping of a whole congregation of Skye terriers. The clammy perspiration with which he had been dripping changed to a cold shiver. No frogs could make a row like that, he was positive; Greville might say what he liked. A still more unbearable noise began in the tree above his head.

"Only an old scissors-grinder," put in Greville: "that is what we call the big crickets that live high up among the leaves. Is not it just like an old man at his grindstone? Mind you do not get stung, Mr. Raynham, there are such a lot of ants crawling about your chair. It is the light brings them out."

A door shut. For the fiftieth time, Greville ran out to see if his father were coming; but he only encountered Pao. "Whatever shall we do until father comes?" he whispered.

"Humph!" returned the boy, with an air of superior sagacity. "I tinkee we no take him walkee no two. Pao knock his head on the ground when he see you safe. I no likee his ways Where's the missee?"

Greville would have explained, when a shriek from the veranda recalled them to their arduous task.

Mr. Raynham had sprung to his feet, and was tearing at his arm as if he would dig a hole in the very flesh.

With the air of a terrier starting a rat, Pao grasped his arm, rolled back sleeve and unfastened vest, as he swiftly pursued the winged enemy to its destruction.

"Hab um! killee!" he exclaimed triumphantly. Raynham gave a groan of relief.

"Can do," observed the boy reflectively to Greville. "Bring him pipe. Soon go sleepee."

Cornelia appeared in the doorway with a marvellous-looking bundle of dirty wadding in her arms, wrapped round with a snowy handkerchief of her father's. She was hugging it most lovingly.

Some disparaging thoughts as to her mental capacity floated through Raynham's mind, when the unsightly bundle emitted a whimpering cry.

"Another squalling thing!" he exclaimed. "Do not bring it near me, Miss Lynthorne, for pity's sake. How do you live out here?"

Cornelia beat a retreat in double-quick time. Greville ran after her.

"We have fed it," she said gleefully, "Marweh and I; we have given it a little of my milk. Goats' milk must be good for it, Grevie,—as good for it as for me," she added, with a little motherly air of mingled earnestness and importance. "And now it

will do nothing but cry, so I thought I would carry it about, for Marweh's gone to the laundryman to see if he has brought my clean dress for to-morrow morning. I cannot let father see me so dirty."

"You had better put the baby back into its basket," urged Greville. "I should keep it there until we have told father all about it. I hope we shall find its mother, in spite of what Marweh says. What shall we do with it if we don't?"

"Keep it," returned Cornelia confidently.

"But may we?" pursued Greville, who saw more rocks ahead than she did. "I do not know what father will say. Any ways, I think I had better try to find its mother. Old Ting told me he was going to fish all night. I wish I could ask him to inquire amongst his neighbours."

Greville ran back to see if he might be off duty for a little while, and leave Mr. Raynham to Pao. He felt rather small when he found his services could be so readily dispensed with. Indeed he began to doubt if he had done wisely in pressing Mr. Raynham to return with him in the boat. One thing was clear: if they had not had that walk, if he and Cornelia had not been left alone in the fields, the baby would have died before the morning. No one there would have noticed it. The one important thing was to find its mother. It was of no use waiting to tell father, for old Ting would be gone before he left the office.

It was quite dark now. Greville could hear the

beating of gongs and snapping of crackers from the river. He knew what that meant. The men in the junks, who were preparing for a midnight sail, were doing chin-chin before they started. The Chinese worship their forefathers, who they believe have gone before them to the heavenly world.

They salute them with the cry of "Chin-chin," just as they greet or take leave of a friend. They add the noise of the gongs and crackers to make the dead hear. This is their evening prayer.

The words "chin-chin" would be best translated by our phrase "kith and kin." The Chinaman calls to his ancestors in the unseen world beyond the grave to remember and help their kith and kin on earth. This ceremony is never omitted, because it is an old custom. Everything in China must be done according to old custom. New ways are most disreputable in their eyes.

Greville knew it was an adventurous thing to go out alone in the dark, but he repeated to himself it was the only chance of speaking to Ting. So he called two of the coolies to bring their lanterns, and take him in his jinricksha to see the boats go off.

The jinricksha (literally, man-power cart) is a small two-wheeled carriage, just big enough for one to ride in. It is dragged along by a coolie in the shafts, very much as children in England drive each other in their favourite little carts. The other coolie

carried a bamboo on his shoulder, with a bright-coloured lantern swinging at each end.

Greville was a generous boy, and the coolie knew that indulging him to-night would bring a handful of cash in the morning.

They unchained the big, wolfish-looking black Pomeranian dog which Mr. Lynthorne kept as a guard. Whang was as thoroughly Chinese in nature as in name. Three years of coaxing and conciliation on Mr. Lynthorne's part had scarcely reconciled him to a foreign master. But he had attached himself to Pao, and his vigilance and intelligence caused him to be treated with a great deal of consideration. Mr. Lynthorne was always charging Greville not to be too risky with him. But that young gentleman had a private persuasion that he could manage Whang better than his father. It was so far true that Whang's antipathy to the foreigner was not so strong to the boy as to the man. He tolerated Greville. For Cornelia he entertained a sort of affection. He regarded her as part and parcel of the ama's belongings, as she never approached him without the safeguard of Marweh's attendance. On the present occasion he pricked up his handsome ears and sniffed suspiciously at Greville's legs, until a lavish outpouring of endearing epithets, and a large supply of English biscuits, satisfied him as to his identity.

They were a merry party. The coolies were singing and laughing in high glee. Greville's spirits rose

as they emerged from the shadow of the trees, and saw the gleaming waters of the broad river of Golden Sand stretching far away in the dim distance. It delighted him to watch the bright flashes come and go from the myriads of snapping crackers, and to see the lamps hung out in the fishing-boats slowly dropping down the river one by one. Which was Ting's ?

Greville sprang upright, almost capsizing cart and coolie, as he recognized the four brown birds and the row of blooming flowers. Yes, there they were—Fo and Ko, and Siou and Wen, as old Ting called them—lifting their broad wings impatiently, and stretching out their black necks, making the whity yellowish pouch under their throats singularly conspicuous.

The coolie ran forward with his lantern to hail the fisherman. Whang barked, and Greville waved his hat. The birds set up a scream, and Greville really thought he need not feel a bit ashamed of his fright in the first moment of their acquaintance. "Father would not have liked it, or anybody else, to have had a bird here, a yard high, making at you with its open beak ; and such a beak ! five or six inches long, with a hook at the end. Well, I thought he would have my head off, and Whang is of the same opinion. He does not like their looks any better than I do."

Greville's soliloquy was cut short. Their signals were noticed ; the boat was coming towards them. A lamp hung in its stern, and a brightly-varnished

white board was screwed to its side, in a sloping position, so as to reflect the light of the lantern.

The fish, attracted by the moving light, leaped up on to the glistening board, and tumbled over into the boat. It was fun to watch the proceeding, and still greater fun to see the cormorants dash down at the word of command from their master. Greville could not even shout his all-important inquiry whilst they were swimming about and diving, with an eager agility one could hardly have expected from such powerful birds. The remainder of Ting's family were asleep. His wife lay with her head propped in a piece of wood, which had been circled out for the purpose, so that she should not disarrange the elaborate rolls into which her black hair had been coiled and starched, until they resembled the handle of a tea-pot attached to the back of her head. The hours she had spent in attaining this result made it necessary to keep it untumbled for the better half of a week at least.

Whilst the lady of clatter and pout thus reposed, and when the first take of fish was safely stowed away in the tank, Ting had time to listen to Greville's story.

"Hum!" rejoined Ting. The coolies dropped down on the ground to rest.

The big gong in the city tolled the hour, and at the sound of this Chinese curfew the babel of sounds within its walls ceased suddenly. After nine o'clock at night, when the great time-gong sounds, no China-

man may venture abroad without a special permit from the police. But the dwellers in the boats and the residents in the English Concession were exempt from these stringent regulations.

The coolies were enjoying the sense of freedom. Ting listened and rubbed his back.

"I savoy," he said at last. "I see notice-board put up over big ditch in Hankow 'No more female infants to be thrown in here. Ditch too full.' New magistrate say it bad pidgin if a *foochin* (father)—literally father-kin, as moochin is really mother-kin—disobeys; he got big bamboo ready. What poor foochin to do? Can't afford to bring it up. Got one, two, three already. Oldo proverb say, 'Five women in one house keep away all thieves.' Why, soon make foochin too poor to have anything left for thieves to take." Old Ting turned up the whites of his eyes, as if his Chinese logic was unanswerable. "Oldo custom say, 'Send little dust-pan to its ancestors.' Moochin a wise woman; she mind magistrate's edict. She only carry little dust-pan out into field, lay it down, and forget to take it up again."

"Brute!" interrupted Greville, shrinking back in horror. "Brute, did I say, to throw away her child! No brute, no beast would ever do so. She is less, less than lowest of them all—less than the very vermin. The rats would even rise up to shame her. Look how they care for their young ones. But—" and Greville suddenly checked himself, adding in an

altered tone, "I have no right to condemn any one on hearsay. It is so unnatural it cannot be true."

"The little missee wantee keepee," put in one of the coolies.

Old Ting burst out laughing again. "If she wantee, she can hab um plenty. Who say no to dat?"

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOME.

GREVILLE went back to Cornelia. She was standing by the bamboo basket, brushing away the flies from the little stranger.

"It has gone to sleep at last," she said softly, lifting her eyes to her brother's, in hushed delight.

He put his arm round her neck and whispered, "Sissy dear, we have saved it from a lingering death; let us think of that. What we are to do with it I do not know. Marweh thinks we have just brought home a lot of bother for her; and you are not strong, and I am only a clumsy boy."

He had vivid recollections of Cornelia's cradle days, when her infant life seemed trembling in the balance—when his mother seemed to live for baby alone. How often had he heard his father say, "Nothing but a mother's unwearied devotion could have reared their little hot-house plant." His reflections ended in a sudden outburst of longing for his mother's return.

"Still," he added earnestly, "we have done right to bring the baby home. We could not leave it to die.

The God who gave its little life was watching us all; it is as much one of his little ones as we are."

"Yes," answered Cornelia; "and we must take care of it as well as we can."

"You are getting so tired you had better go to bed," urged Greville.

As they exchanged their nightly kiss he added, "I'll wait up and tell father; if you get ill, we know what he will say."

"But I shall not be asleep; you will come to the door and tell me what father says," she urged.

The promise was given; Greville went back to Mr. Raynham.

Two hours later, Mr. Lynthorne, looking the very picture of exhaustion and fatigue, opened his dining-room door. He held out a languid hand to the young stranger, and bade him heartily welcome to Hankow.

Raynham roused himself from his semi-sleep, and stammered a reply, aware that the wearied eye that was looking him through was taking his measure at an unfortunate moment. Never had he felt so miserably below par. Mr. Lynthorne glanced at the waiting dinner-table. "Why, Greville, you have not been waiting for me, have you?" he asked hastily. "Did not I send Pao hours ago—"

"Yes, father; but Mr. Raynham said he could not eat," was the quick reply.

"Feel ill, my lad?" inquired Mr. Lynthorne kindly, veiling the despair the discovery awakened.

"Just a bit seedy," answered Raynham.

"You must be careful; you must let me prescribe for you," returned his new master, leaving unspoken the warning remonstrance concerning those untimely delays which he had entered the room prepared to deliver with crushing effect.—"Where is Marweh?" he asked.

The coolies who were entering with the hot dishes quickly summoned the nurse. Mr. Lynthorne walked into the hall to meet her, and placed young Raynham under her especial care.

"He will be down with fever by the morning," he said, taking the gloomiest view possible, "and your mistress away."

Raynham turned to Greville, and began a rambling story of his schoolboy days, expressive of his abhorrence of tell-tales. Greville was not slow to draw the desired inference.

"Mr. Raynham," he remarked in return, "perhaps I ought to tell you, we never worry father about little things."

Instead of replying, Raynham sprang to his feet with a howl, like one in torment. His miseries had culminated in an insect dagger-thrust in his knee.

"Take refuge behind your fly-curtains," said Mr. Lynthorne, hurrying back again. "Make yourself at home, my poor young friend. Remember, I know what it is. Well, I have been reduced more than

once to tear my own flesh with a rusty nail. Pao shall bring you the ammonia-bottle."

As Raynham limped across the hall, Greville was at his father's elbow. "Father, you have eaten nothing; what will you have?"

"Fetch my pipe; it may soothe me down a bit. This is a bad beginning. Tell those fellows to clear away that odious pork; I cannot bear the sight of it. There, good-night; this is far too late for you, my boy."

"Yes, father, I'm going; but—" began Greville.

"Well, all 'buts' must be left till the morning. I am beaten out of time;" and the poor charsee flung himself on the long bamboo chair which Raynham had vacated, and closed his eyes wearily. When he opened them half-an-hour later, Greville was still standing by him.

"Now this is wrong," he said, shaking his head, and pointing to the door.

"Only, father, I wanted to tell you Cornelia and I have found a baby," ventured Greville at last.

"Well, never mind if you have found a dozen. You have got the house to yourselves; but leave me in peace for one poor five minutes, if it is possible," groaned the worn-out merchant.

With this somewhat dubious permit, Greville perforce retreated, not forgetting the promised whisper at Cornelia's door. "We will show it to father in the morning," they decided.

They had reached the dead of night. But a Chinese night brings with it no kindly dews of balmy sleep, only aggravated discomforts. The few scant snatches of repose are too often rudely broken by sudden thunder-claps, and the studiously darkened rooms are lit up with blinding flashes of lightning, as brief, down-dashing bursts of rain sweep through the open doors and windows; while the knell-like sound of the watch-gong strikes the half-hour from the boats on the river. Weird experiences for the new arrival, who seemed to discern approaching monsters in the waving arms of the garden trees.

Oh the wretchedness of that first night to Raynham, tossing in feverish weariness, the very prey of disgust and dread! The dawn brought with it renewed snatches of troubled sleep, from which he was aroused by Pao gliding noiselessly to his bedside with the invariable cup of tea.

Six o'clock precisely. One more spell of sleep, and Raynham presented himself at the family breakfast-hour, looking more dead than alive.

Mr. Lynthorne, already on the move, was standing to eat his egg, when the rest of his family appeared—tardily enough, it must be confessed. Greville had overslept himself outrageously. Cornelia alone could claim the reputation of the early bird. She had breakfasted before any one else, and had vanished. Yes, but her milk was unfinished. The goat's milk Mr. Lynthorne had procured to strengthen her, at

inconceivable trouble and expense, was that going to be a failure, like everything else ?

He had sent for the goat from India, expressly for her benefit, and now she would not touch the milk. He took up the cup to examine the contents, and called for Pao.

Some chance remark brought to light the unwise walk of the preceding evening. "Come, young man," pursued Mr. Lynthorne, "we know now what is the matter with you. Three days' rest will set you on your feet again. But if we are to keep you there, you must be content to put yourself in leading-strings, until you know what sort of a country you have entered."

Conscious of having betrayed more irritation than he intended, Mr. Lynthorne walked away into the garden.

Cornelia intercepted him with the baby in her arms. "Just look at it, father," she entreated.

"Impossible, my dear, when I have not one moment to spare. Take it to Marweh."

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. LYNTHORNE'S RETURN.

THE little foundling was left asleep under Marweh's care, and the brother and sister took their morning walk. They bent their steps to the river-bank, hoping to see old Ting. Cornelia had brought one of her dolls for Old-ah-you. It was impossible now to think of dressing one expressly for her, the baby would take so much time. A coolie walked behind them, carrying a great white umbrella for Cornelia's benefit. But the row of cormorants was nowhere to be seen. The children were thinking of returning, when they unexpectedly caught sight of their little acquaintance of the preceding evening, the ragged duck-boy, sailing down the river on a tiny raft. This raft was only a bit of the trunk of a hollow tree; but he managed it very cleverly, keeping his huge flock of ducks swimming round him.

A bright thought flashed through Greville's mind. He turned to Kuen-Erh, their coolie, and sent him to find out from the duck-driver all he knew about the baby.

Greville and Cornelia sat down beneath the shade of the great umbrella, and watched the merry ducks, who every now and then refused to keep their ranks. One or two came up on to the bank,—beautiful mandarin ducks, keeping close to their neat little mates, and spreading their gorgeous plumage in the morning sun, bowing their crested heads and fluttering their wing-fans. In short, they were just exhibiting their best clothes before they laid them aside for the hot weather; for with true Chinese thrift these splendid fellows put away their glorious feathers for four months in the year, and appear like ordinary ducks, looking as if they had borrowed an old dress of gray and brown from their sober little mates. Then their curious wing-fans and crests reappear, and they strut about again in varying hues of purple and green, chestnut and white.

The little boy in blue had a piteous story to tell. His foochin loved opium better than anything. He was always wanting more and more, until there were no cash left to buy it; and nothing more to sell, only his boys. So the foo took the eldest and sold him to the man in the big boat with the duck-coops.

The long bamboo pointed out the floating home of the ducks' master, where the huge flock had all been hatched and reared and trained, until their intelligence was something truly astonishing. This man had lost his own son, so he bought the ragged boy in blue to take his place.

As usual, Kuen-Erh was gabbling away so fast that Greville could not understand all he told him. He saw the duck-boy count his fingers twice over. Greville could not be sure whether it were twenty days or twenty weeks since his father had sold him; but this was plain—he had never seen his foo since, and his heart was aching; for he and his brother had loved each other dearly, and they would never play together again. His moochin was crying when the duck-man fetched him; she could not bear to part with him.

But what did he know about the baby?

Cornelia was pressing for an answer, afraid that the object of their inquiries should be lost sight of in their pity for the little lad's hard fate.

He seemed to divine what she was saying. He fixed his bead-like black eyes upon her as Kuen-Erh explained that the baby was the boy's own little sister. He had recognized it as it lay on the edge of the ditch, and had so longed to kiss it once again. Where had they put it? Where was it now? His moochin said she would throw it away if she might but keep his other brother. She always loved him best. But what had they done with the baby? put it to sleep?

"Yes," answered Cornelia innocently. "We mean to take care of it, unless we must give it back to its mother."

Kuen scarcely thought it worth while to interpret such very childish talk. The ducks certainly con-

sidered the conversation had lasted long enough. They took fright at the waving of the flag on the foremost of a row of government money-boats, which were sailing down the river with their loads of cash to supply the city banks.

They huddled themselves together, around and almost under their driver's raft, setting up such a quacking and squalling it was impossible to hear another word. Greville and Cornelia shouted a promise after the boy that if he would be at the same place to-morrow, he should see and kiss his little sister. They did not ask Kuen-Erh for any more explanations. Had they not heard enough? They walked on in silence. It had fallen upon them unawares, but Cornelia was the first to break it.

"Only think, Grevie, if you and I were parted, and one of us were sold!"

On their return they found Pao doing his hair. This was a work of some hours, as his pigtail was braided as closely as the thong of a whip. Doing hair in China is a matter of great importance. No one thinks of brushing it out every day. Pao did his twice a week. He was softly whistling to himself, and looking unusually self-complacent.

"Master Greville," he said, "the missisee come home. Good medicine-house that in Shang-hai; no likee that in all China. Number one medicine-man takee out bad eye pidgin. The missisee Presgrave go out, no can see; come backee, can see."

"Mother at home!" exclaimed Greville, looking round with disbelieving eyes, "and you sitting here brushing out your hair!"

"Where is she? where is her luggage?" asked Cornelia, rushing from room to room to look for her mother, or for some evidence of her return.

"Now, Master Greville, now," remonstrated Pao, "you too plenty hurry for top-side man. De great bell strikes seldom and slow; de big bucket, de full bucket standee still and steady. You be number one—you be likee them."

Having set before his young master these truly Chinese ideals, Pao proceeded to explain. The runner had left a letter to say Mrs. Lynthorne might be expected home that day. This runner was a sort of private postman kept by the Chinese merchants, who often accommodated the foreign residents, in the different cities through which he passed, by carrying their letters also.

"Bother!" exclaimed Greville; "we may have hours to wait. You will never be up to the tenses, Pao. You should have told us mother was coming, and you said she had come."

There was nothing for Greville and Cornelia to do but to watch and wait.

The Chinese servants, with their usual care and exactitude, had everything ready for their mistress's arrival. Even her old shoes were placed on the very spot on the floor of her dressing-room where she

chanced to leave them, her favourite chair at the same angle from the window to which she had happened to push it on the morning of her departure.

Greville betook himself to his look-out among the tallest trees in the avenue.

Mr. Lynthorne, whose impatience equalled his children's, felt every ten minutes an hour, and kept his coolies running with messages, to ascertain if any one on the river had yet sighted the house-boat, in which it was expected the ladies would return.

Cornelia, who was kept indoors by Marweh, on account of the heat, beguiled her longing expectation with snatches of baby-worship.

Two hours, three hours passed before Greville waved his joyous signal up the avenue, "Mother is coming!"

Pao bore the glad news in low whispers to his master's ear, just as the one hundred and sixtieth cup of tea was being lifted to his weary lips, and for once Mr. Lynthorne made a mistake. He thought the leaf he was testing was a shade too dark. The shade was in his own eyes. He chose a worse sample. No unpractised eye could have perceived the slightest difference between the two. By that trifling mistake he lost three hundred and seventy pounds!—the cost of an interruption. Well might Raynham exclaim, "What a life!"

Every line of Greville's expressive face, every twitch of his restless eyelids, told his mother of some important secret about to be disclosed to her; and

when the baby set up a true Chinese yowl as she entered her fragrant-scented, shadowy drawing-room, she had many misgivings. Her eye glanced quickly over fairy table and china vase, expecting to see some strange inhabitant with beak and wings doing deadly damage amongst porcelain and *bric-à-brac.*

Her observations were reassuring, but she turned to her children as the yowl was repeated.

Cornelia was on her lap in an instant, and Greville at her elbow, beginning in a breath the same important announcement: "Mother, we had a walk—"

"Not one, but many, I hope, my dears," she answered, smiling at their earnest, eager tones.

"What! telling the secret already!" said Mr. Lynthorne, pausing in the doorway to watch the happy group with loving pride.

"We want to make mother guess what it is we've found!" cried Greville.

"And what it is you have saved," added Mr. Lynthorne, seating himself beside them, adding in a low aside, "Few children could gladden a mother's ears with a tale like theirs, my dear. Those vigorous screams may tell you how well they have done their part."

"They save me all the trouble of guessing," laughed Mrs. Lynthorne. "You might as well show me the baby, and then tell me how it got here."

When Cornelia returned with the darling in her arms, she knew her father was saying something about the Italian Foundling Hospital.

CHAPTER IX.

IN HANKOW.

THE hard-working tea-market month came to an end at last. Mr. Lynthorne dryly observed that he must, even he, take a week to gather together his shattered remains, and recruit the few shreds of energy this perpetual tea-tasting had left him. Then Greville's daily lessons must recommence. Raynham must be fairly drilled, and life resume its wonted channels.

During this week the visit to the Italian sisters must be paid. A baby was a baby whether it were yellow or white, and he knew his wife's nerves and self-control had been taxed to their uttermost during her sojourn at Shang-hai.

The operation which had restored Mrs. Presgrave's sight had been a terrible ordeal, and in their joy at its success it was not for him to forget the strain it had put upon Mrs. Lynthorne; and then, as soon as she got home again, her motherly care was needful for young Raynham. She must have rest now. That indiscreet visit to the city on the first night of

Raynham's arrival had ended in a low feverish attack, from which he had yet scarcely recovered. Mrs. Presgrave's weakened health made her, even now, helplessly dependent upon her neighbour's kindness; consequently Raynham was often left to find amusement for his convalescent hours as best he could.

"Spends too much time with those young Russians from the brick-tea factory; gets too fond of the European racecourse. It will be all the better for him to be in harness now," thought Mr. Lynthorne; but he was too kind-hearted to make Raynham return to his office work during the insufferable heat of a Chinese midsummer. The poor fellow was in ceaseless conflict with an ever-rising thermometer, and declared himself stewing away like the eels in the coolies' broth-pot.

Meanwhile Mr. Lynthorne had his clerk's work to do himself.

"Mr. Raynham might help father a little, but he does not try," observed Greville indignantly, when he saw the few leisure days to which his father had been looking forward were all taken up at the desk.

It was an understood thing that the baby was to be sent to the Foundling Hospital, at the Italian Mission, when Mr. Lynthorne had time to see after it; and he promised to take Greville with him when he went.

Every day's delay made the baby grow the dearer to Cornelia, who had many a secret cry beside its basket cradle at the thought of parting with it.

One morning when she awakened early she heard her father call up Greville, and something told her the dreaded hour of separation had arrived. Mrs. Lynthorne came herself and told her an answer had been received from the Italian sisters, and her father and Greville were going to take the baby to them at once.

Before many minutes were over, Cornelia was kneeling by the bamboo basket, covering the little yellow face within it with despairing kisses. The coolies with their chairs were already at the door: one with four bearers for Mr. Lynthorne (for Englishmen are so much heavier than Chinamen), a smaller one with two bearers for Greville, and a wheelbarrow for Marweh and the baby. The coolies were packing their big rush hats and cloaks of mango leaves sewn together underneath the chairs, for fear of a spot of rain. Chinamen cannot endure a drop of rain, and make as much fuss about getting their feet wet as a cat.

Cornelia held the baby in her arms until the last minute. Mrs. Lynthorne was assuring her it was really for the best, and her father said all sorts of funny things to make her laugh; but when she tried, the laugh ended in something so like a sob that Mr. Lynthorne thought it wisest to cut the leave-taking short, and called to Marweh to get in.

"Never mind," whispered Greville to his sister. "It is such a great thing to have saved the baby, any way."

Some of the coolies had naked feet, but the others wore thin open-work grass slippers. Off they set at a brisk jog-trot, taking care how they stepped, so as to swing the sedan and not tilt it.

The sight of the baby in its English clothes called forth a chorus of laughter from the merry coolies. Baby waked and began a piteous cry. Greville turned half round in his chair to soothe it, with a low, soft whistle, which set the coolies off laughing again. Whistling is an unknown art in China; and Greville was asked more than once, in the course of their journey, to "makee birdee again."

Mr. Lynthorne had started betimes, when most of his English neighbours were still sipping their early tea.

Within the city, the diligent Chinamen were all astir. Shops were open, and beggars abroad by dozens, making a trade of their ghastly sores.

The streets were so narrow that if Mr. Lynthorne had stretched out both arms he would have touched the shop-counters on either side. The shops were no better than sheds or booths at a fair. None of them had glass windows—very little glass is used in China, as it draws the heat.

Some of the men were already at work at the back of their shops, others were sitting on their steps doing their hair. That portion of their toilet receives due attention everywhere in China. Men are so proud of the length of their pig-tails, any disaster to them is looked upon as a serious calamity. But washing is

by no means a daily necessary, and soap an almost unknown commodity. Some of the men were hurrying out to get a breakfast at one of the numerous cook-shops, or if they could afford it, at one of the splendid tea-saloons of which Hankow may be justly proud. Every alley and street and court was swarming with life, but not one woman could be seen. Coolies in couples came running with a heavy weight between them, slung on a stout bamboo, and wheelbarrows were driving through the painted gateways which divided the streets and bore their names. Mr. Lynthorne's coolies kept up an incessant shout, equivalent to "Make way, make way!" But it was no easy matter to comply in those interminable lanes, always crossing each other. Without mutual accommodation it was simply an impossibility to get through the city at all. Every Chinaman knows this, and foot-passengers retreat, without the ceremony of asking leave, first into one shop and then into another, in the slow progression.

Greville's chair was hastily hoisted up among the rusty locks and keys adorning an ironmonger's counter, and his head brought into unpleasant proximity with a dingy drapery of rusty chains and odd-shaped iron implements, hanging so thickly from the ceiling that the back of the shop must have been in utter darkness but for the gleam of the forge.

A few steps farther, under another wooden gateway bearing the name "Facing Kwan-tai's Temple

Street," and Greville found himself jammed against a carpenter's work-place, packed from floor to ceiling with piles of tubs, pails, basins, chairs, and bedsteads, all painted red.

It was of no use being in a hurry in Hankow streets, as Mr. Lynthorne knew. He folded his arms, inculcating the patience of Job in brief asides to Greville, and good-naturedly laughing at every disaster. Now and then a perfect block occurred in the narrow ways, when two sets of carriers ran against each other round some abrupt corner, and overset the heavy bales they were bearing on their shoulders. At such a stand-still, Greville had time to look about him a little more attentively. There were the boot-makers and the hat-makers hard at work. Opening to the right was a street all basket-makers. A little farther on, to the left, was a really beautiful sight—the window of a silk-shop, adorned with skeins of every shade and colour. Close at hand was the joss-house or temple of Kwan-tai; the said temple being nothing better than a dirty shed, which was rarely if ever visited by broom or whitewash-brush. It might once have been painted; and as for the dust-covered image of Kwan-tai which it contained, the proverbial dirt of the Laplander would have been as nothing to the accumulation of grit and grime which obscured it. One or two women were hobbling in, to burn their sticks of incense before it; for Chinese women are permitted to "go do joss," and

get their fortunes told. The temple was full of small tables, improvised by setting a tray on a basket. Each one had its group of idlers. Some were watching to pick up the fortune-telling slips which a priest was shaking out of a bamboo jar; others were gambling over their dice or tossing money. At one of the trays a professional scribe was writing a letter, which a fruit-seller was dictating at the top of his voice.

Just outside the temple, men were busy setting out their stalls, as if they were preparing for a fair. Some were bringing trays of cakes and sweets; a sticky, black-looking jelly was in great request. Greville only wondered how any one could touch it. Others were laying out a most curious variety of odds and ends—pipes, combs, cups, lanterns, children's toys, beads, and plenty of little pictures in frames; Chinese ink, and umbrellas, paraffin lamps, purses, and jade-stone bracelets. Amusing as all this might have been, Greville was thankful to get away, for the noise was deafening; every one inside or outside the temple was talking at his very loudest. But this was nothing to the overpowering effluvia they inhaled at every corner. The heavy air was made still heavier by the puffs of smoke and clouds of ashes from the cooking-fires, which were being lighted close to the front doors of the numerous eating-houses.

It was an exceeding relief when they left the shops, and passed between the blank walls of a merchant's hong, or a mandarin's *ya-men* or official residence,

where there was never a window to be seen, and scarcely a door. But Greville was sick and dizzy, almost choked and blinded with the heat and dust. He scarcely knew where he was, when the coolies set him down at the door of the Italian Mission. But when he found himself by his father's side in a large, cool room, and heard the pleasant voice of the Italian *madre* (the lady superior of the establishment), and shook hands with a kind-looking *sorella* or sister, he began to breathe again. Mr. Lynthorne had left Marweh and the baby outside, in the wheelbarrow, until he saw what the foundling hospital was like. The sorella offered to show him their nurseries and schoolrooms, and the madre expressed her willingness to take charge of the little outcast. She said they had about five hundred babies already, which they had put out to nurse to Chinese women; and about the same number of children, between two and twelve, in their own care.

"We cannot," she said, "provide for these children as they grow up; so we are trying to educate them to be useful Chinese women. We hope to send them into native homes, where they may prove an elevating and refining Christian influence, that may reach the heart of this singular people, who repel all foreign teaching with contempt. We feel that we must not make them Europeans, or the Chinese would turn against them. The sisters are all devoted to their work, and the children are happy."

Greville watched his father's face, as he sat and fanned himself, until the sorella opened the school-room door.

It was most interesting to Greville to watch the rows of bamboo stools and tiny tables, the primitive looms and twirling distaffs; for the girls were being taught to weave and spin, as well as all kinds of Chinese needlework, up to the most splendid silk-embroidery. A dozen little black-haired girls, who were nearest to the door by which Mr. Lynthorne had entered, burst into an irrepressible chorus of laughter; but at a sign from another sorella, who was giving them a writing lesson, they bent down, banging their foreheads on the floor, with renewed bursts of merry laughter. This slavish performance tried Mr. Lynthorne, who endeavoured to stop it by scattering amongst them the cash with which he had filled his pockets. All to no purpose: little black heads were bobbing up and down from every loom and embroidery-frame, and bumping on the floor with such hearty good-will that it suggested no end of disfiguring bruises to his English ears. But the sisters had no such apprehensions. They quickly restored order; and as the children rose to their feet, they all began to sing a well-known Chinese tune.

The rasping of as many little files would have been as musical; but Mr. Lynthorne was expected to praise the performance. Poor Greville was choking with laughter; he had just found out that they were

writing with brushes, not with pens, in their queer little yellow copy-books. He liked well enough to take a peep at their odd-looking Chinese writing, and examine the writing-slab, and the stick of Chinese ink with which each scholar was provided.

Mr. Lynthorne smiled at the little singers, and turned to their lovely embroidery, which he could praise with all his heart. Indeed, he wished to become a purchaser; he must take some back with him to show Mrs. Lynthorne.

Then the singing began again:—

"*K'in, k'in*, the bells peal on,
And the lutes in the concert we hear;
Deep breathes the organ tone,
Sounding stones join their notes, rich and clear,
The while through the vessel there ring
The 'Ye' and the 'Nan' which they sing;
And the dancers with flutes now appear."

"We are careful," observed the sorella, "to teach them to sing and to play in their native fashion, the Chinese think so much of the saying of their great Confucius, 'Music gives the finish to the character.'"

Mr Lynthorne most heartily agreed, approving all he saw; and the sorella led the way to another class-room, where the younger children were taking their first lesson at the loom.

"This," she said, "it is very necessary to teach them, as every Chinese family spins, weaves, and dyes its own materials."

But what was the matter with the children?

CHAPTER X.

THE ITALIAN SISTERS.

MR. LYNTHORNE repeated his question with real concern as he looked at the little faces before him, pale and drawn with excruciating pain, and listened to the gasping breath, the low moans, and the sharp cries which every movement on the part of the little scholars seemed to awaken.

"What is the matter with these children?" he reiterated gravely.

"*Imbandite*," replied the sorella, in her soft Italian, looking round upon them with kind, compassionate eyes.

Greville had never heard the Italian word before, but he guessed its meaning. He laid his hand on his father's arm, and pointed to their feet. He remembered Old-ah-you. He had no need to ask what was the matter.

"It is a concession to Chinese prejudice it grieves us to make," added the sorella. "Two Chinese women come every day to attend to them. I think all these will get through; but their health suffers. Three

died last year—it was so grieving; but the madre has decided that it must be done, or they will never be received in respectable Chinese society. The pain will grow less and less by degrees, until it ceases altogether.

"How long does it usually last?" asked Mr. Lynthorne, in short, stern tones.

"Until the girls are about sixteen," she answered.

Mr. Lynthorne saw a vacant stool; and seating himself upon it, he lifted up a little toddler, between three and four, and set her on his knee. She was terrified at first, and looked into his face as if he were some ogre about to devour her; but his fatherly ways reassured her. He dived into his pockets, and produced a box of English sweets, which he had kept for Cornelia's benefit; and whilst the little creature ventured upon a taste, he examined its feet.

Greville knelt down beside him, that he might see too. The four smaller toes of each foot were twisted out of joint, and tied back under the sole with silken strings. The ulceration and inflammation which this cruel usage had occasioned seemed to threaten mortification. He turned away his head with a shudder.

"O father," whispered Greville, "will they do so to our baby?"

"No," returned Mr. Lynthorne, as he gently put back the little girl between her class-mates, leaving her to divide her treasure amongst them. He turned

to the sorella, saying in tones of grave rebuke, "Good-morning, signora. I have seen enough. I respect your noble desire to elevate your Chinese sisters; I admire the self-denial which has brought you from your native land to save these little outcasts; but to condemn them to pass their whole childhood in pain and suffering is surely doing evil that good may come. I can have no hand in it. I cannot countenance a practice that from the depths of my heart I condemn. I am a blunt Englishman, and must speak out."

The sorella looked hurt and disappointed as Mr. Lynthorne strode back to the madre's reception-room, followed by Greville. The inevitable cup of tea was waiting for them, and some lovely fruit from the sisters' own garden. The madre had fetched Marweh and the baby indoors, as the sun was growing very oppressive.

"Will you leave the child with us?" asked the Italian lady; "it seems strong and healthy."

"Not yet," answered Mr. Lynthorne; "but as it grows older, I want to send it to your school. After a few more years of tea-tasting in Hankow, if I take my own family back to England, will you receive it as a boarder?"

The madre bowed her head in assent. She knew the liberality of the English merchants was proverbial, and she foresaw their establishment would gain by the agreement.

Mr. Lynthorne wished to leave a donation behind

him, as an earnest of his good intentions. Then came the money difficulty: English gold was of no use to the madre in Hankow; and the remaining cash in his pockets did not amount to twopence-halfpenny. Well, he really could not offer her that. Oh, the bore of having to pay for everything in farthings! it wore his life out. He always carried a few lumps of silver about with him. He offered three, weighing as much as thirty of our English shillings. She begged him to exchange them for ordinary cash; the shopkeepers would not like silver—not many of them knew what it was.

In despair, Mr. Lynthorne promised to send her a sackful of cash in a wheelbarrow. She thought of the pilferings by the way. Could the coolies resist such a temptation?

"I'll make it safe," answered Mr. Lynthorne. "I will buckle a leathern strap round the sack. I never met with a Chinaman yet who could manage an English buckle. It is as safe out here as a padlock."

So the weighty matter was settled; and to Greville's great joy they started homewards, taking the baby back again.

The traffic in the streets had increased, the stoppages were incessant. There were the usual noisy haggling and bargaining over the counters of the shops, and the customary howling in the market-place, where some unfortunate wretch was undergoing punishment from the magisterial bamboo. It made

Greville miserable to hear him; but his fellow-townsmen took not the slightest notice of his cries and groans, although it was very likely the constables had caught the wrong man. A theft had been committed, and now somebody had been punished for it: Chinese justice was satisfied, and English outraged. It is hard to turn away from scenes like these and keep silence. It is hard to see such cruel oppression all round and not be able to stop it. Mr. Lynthorne's whole soul was chafing with desires which could find no outlet in action, when Greville called to him,—

"Look, father! is not that Mr. Raynham?"

Mr. Lynthorne looked, and saw his young clerk in the midst of a group of idlers, arm in arm with a French resident of whose character he knew something. They were watching a pitched battle between two fighting quails, whose owners were betting away their day's pay over the probable winner.

A cloud passed over Mr. Lynthorne's worn face; he got out of his chair and tapped Raynham lightly on the shoulder. "Is the game worth the candle?" he asked. "You cannot brave this heat without risking a relapse. Take my place, for the sooner you are home the better."

It was useless for Raynham to hesitate; Mr. Lynthorne would take no refusal. He got him away, and his fatherly warning that place and company were alike to be avoided was heeded for a time; but the poor fellow was the victim of *ennui*, which the

lively conversation of his new-found friend did much to dissipate. Why, he demanded, should the English keep in their small corner, and the French in theirs? There was no tempestuous Channel to divide them here. French and English should be forgotten. They should only remember that they were Europeans and neighbours.

"True, true," returned Mr. Lynthorne: "we must be winter-day friends to them all; but it will never do to follow their lead, especially in their behaviour to the natives. Remember, young man, it is the upright life of the Englishman abroad that really tells upon the heathen world. Its influence may be slow, but it tells at last; and it is just because we English merchants have always kept this in view, and have always treated our Chinese neighbours with justice and kindness and firmness, that our English settlements here have prospered so signally. I am sorry to say our French neighbours take a different course. To the great unwashed among the Chinese all foreigners are alike; but we are trying to teach them the difference."

Raynham thought this an uncommonly long sermon to follow an idle bet. Now he had pocketed his first quarter's salary, he felt as rich as Crœsus—quite able to throw away a few shillings if he liked. He looked upon his "new governor" as a most unfortunate individual, whose nervous system was kept on the rack by his detestable occupation; for Raynham had

made up his mind that tea-tasting was enough to kill a horse, and his pity for Mr. Lynthorne's condition made him listen with so good a grace, that his English master confided to Mrs. Lynthorne that Raynham's mind was open to reason. He believed he had only to put things before him in a right light, and he would soon be all he could wish.

But with Greville, who had brought the lecture upon him, Raynham was considerably annoyed. They reached the hong before Mr. Lynthorne, and giving the boy one of his blackest looks, he went into his own room to take his siesta. "To sulk," Greville said in his heart; but he was ready to put up with a great deal from Raynham. He did not mind being looked down upon. He took no notice of sundry snaps and snubs, because of the exceeding delight of being near somebody fresh from England. For now and then Raynham condescended to tell him stories of the school-desk and the playground, and even to show him how to handle a bat or run a paper-chase. In return, Greville waited upon him as if he had been his fag. Pao's example had taught Greville how to learn by observation, and how to copy with a careful accuracy that made him very useful to Raynham. Yet they were not friends; there was a sort of distrust between them. The happy, open-hearted confidence which existed between Greville and his father prevented Raynham talking to him as freely as he otherwise might.

"It is easy to see it will all go," he said contemptuously, and never lost an opportunity of denouncing a tell-tale in Greville's hearing, who as invariably asserted his detestation of such a character, and warmly repudiated the idea that he could ever become one. It made him keep his estimate of Raynham's character to himself. Just now his indifference to the black look he had received was very real; for he was full of his visit to the Italian sisters, and could think of nothing but the baby. Cornelia would be overjoyed to find they had brought it back again.

Marweh was gabbling away in Chinese to Pao. Greville was quite sure she was grumbling at him for having saddled such a burden upon her. Surely she was not going to be cross to the baby; he saw her give it such a shake because it would scream. Up he ran and took it from her.

"You turn ama!" she croaked. "You no nursee, —no, no."

"And why should not I turn nursee?" he asked, in such a ludicrous tone she could not help laughing. "I fished it up; it is my little Moses. Is not it better than twenty rabbits, fifteen guinea-pigs, and all the birds in the house?"

He caught sight of an embroidered apron of his mother's spread on the grass to dry; and tying it on with mock gravity, he persisted in carrying off the child, well knowing that his drollery would keep Marweh in a good temper when everything else failed.

"Right, Master Greville," observed Pao: "you keepee de leetle dust-pan, and send Marweh to medicine-man; she want good dose medicine, cure dat bad passion."

The idea was thoroughly Chinese, and Marweh, somewhat ashamed of herself, went off humbly to her wheelbarrow, to visit the nearest Chinese doctor.

When Mr. Lynthorne returned, he found Greville sitting on the steps of the portico, rocking his "little Moses," and whistling a few low notes from "Home, Sweet Home."

If there was one thing Mr. Lynthorne hated above all others, it was to be carried in a sedan. To sit at ease and watch the bare shoulders of the poor coolies, kneaded by the poles which supported it until they were black and blue, overwhelmed him with a sense of shame for the remainder of the day. He had risked his life more than once by overwalking in the heat to avoid it. He was sauntering towards his hong with a very dejected air, the relentless heat rising beneath his feet, and the perspiration streaming from every pore, until his coat was so stiffened it seemed ready to stand alone as he flung it from him on the doorstep.

"Well, my boy," he said, observing Greville's occupation, "what is to be done now?"

"If we may, father, I don't see why I and Cornelia can't take care of it, and teach it as well as those Italian nuns. Just look at it, father; I've got it to sleep in no time," answered the boy, holding the wee

face towards him. "Somebody must take care of it; and if nobody else is willing, then we must."

"But you must remember," continued Mr. Lynthorne, "it is not an animated plaything to be made much of whilst it is new and pleases you, and then to be thrown aside when you are tired of the trouble."

"O father," remonstrated Greville, "we don't mind being tired. We never give up because we are tired. Did Cornelia and I ever forget to feed her goat Indy? Haven't I looked after Whang ever since he came, and all my rabbits, and mother's birds? You know I have."

"Yes, I know you have," returned his father, "and that is an earnest for the future; but this baby will want a great deal more and a different kind of care. You heard what the sisters said to me about the after-life of these little girls; we must think of that."

"Of course we'll try and teach her to be good," answered Greville quickly.

"If you want to put good thoughts in that little mind, you must have them in your own first. You must get rid of your own bad ways, or with her Chinese propensities she will copy them all. I heard you storming at one of the coolies the other day as if you were the Sultan of Turkey; that won't do."

The conscious colour mounted to Greville's brow, and he looked down without replying.

"Do you know what these Chinese say of us?" continued Mr. Lynthorne—"what I have heard them

say when I have stood behind a crowd that was listening to one of our missionaries?"

Greville looked up now. His father went on:—

"Just this: 'If these Christians lived like their Book, nothing could stand before it. The wrong lives undo all the good talking.' Remember that, my boy. There is an old English verse that your great-grandmother taught me before I was your age, and we can't beat it—

'When do well and say well
Are joined in one frame,
Then all is done, all is won,
And gotten is the game.'"

"Do you mean, father, that we may keep my little Moses?" cried Greville joyfully.

"Yes," responded Mr. Lynthorne slowly. "It is of no use doing things by halves, or when once you have started turning back. The child is here, and it must be cared for. Go on, and do your best by it; but it will be more to Cornelia than to you."

"I don't see that at all, father," remonstrated Greville. "She will be its moo, but I shall be its foo. I shall think the most of its future. I had a 'good look see' at that loom in the corner of that wretched second schoolroom, and I shall get Pao to buy me one, and see if I can't weave a bit, ready to teach my Moses; and I shall keep a savings-bank for her, and put by all my silver-dust."

"Come into the office and sweep it up every pay-day; by the time she is a woman she will have a lap-

ful of silver-dust for her fortune. Well, it is a most original idea, but not a bad one. Only you must not let this baby be any bother to your mother," said Mr. Lynthorne, as he walked slowly into the house.

Mrs. Lynthorne and Cornelia had gone out, and did not return until the welcome twilight hour had arrived. When they reached the gate of the hong, the old scissors-grinder was at work in his tree, and the big grasshoppers were leaping about more wildly than ever. Mrs. Lynthorne's colony of doves were cooing their sweetest. All nature seemed rejoicing in the brief respite from the broiling heat. The usual fusilade of crackers was going forward among the junks on the river; but every sight and sound seemed to add to Greville's delight, as he stood in the veranda holding up the baby before Cornelia's astonished eyes, when he heard Raynham calling him. He turned round, put the baby in Cornelia's outstretched arms, and ran off to see what he wanted.

"Just give this note to Davydow," said Raynham; "he is one of the young Russians at the brick-tea factory. Don't you know him?" he added, seeing Greville hesitate.

"But—" began Greville.

"'But!' you are always full of 'buts.' But what indeed?" retorted Raynham, who had not recovered his temper.

"But where shall I find him?" returned Greville. That is rather an important 'but,' I should imagine."

"Am I the stranger here, or are you?" demanded Raynham crossly. "If you were half a boy, you would know he comes to Wymering's hong every morning. You are up to nothing, always wandering along hand-in-hand with that little sister of yours, or dancing a baby by way of variety. A pretty sort of boy you are. Never saw a horse in your life even."

"You need not talk like that," said Greville.

"Come, shut up; there is preaching enough in this house without you beginning." Raynham flung the note towards Greville as he spoke, and marched off to his favourite resort, the reading-room at the European club, which all the foreign residents had united in establishing.

Greville smarted under a sense of injustice, stung by the half-truth of Raynham's taunts. He picked up the note willingly, since it did not involve a walk to the Russian factory, which stood on what was for him forbidden ground, although he longed to go there.

Just now the Russian factory was a centre of attraction to the whole of the merchant community. These Russians had come to buy the tea-dust swept up daily in the other hongs as waste, whilst the tea-sorting and packing went forward. They boiled this into solid cakes, which went by the name of "brick-tea," a cheap commodity eagerly bought by the poor in their own land. Greville knew they had brought with them four or five ponies from their native steppes. The arrival of these ponies created a sensa-

tion in the Concession; their stables became a favourite resort. Everybody but Greville had been to look at them—to watch them exercise, to see them fed. The pleasure the sight of them afforded to men who had not looked upon a horse for years was incredible. They said they were ugly and ill-tempered. Greville hardly believed that. His father had promised again and again to take him to see them; but owing to Raynham's defections, the spare half-hour in which this promise was to be fulfilled never came. These ponies acted as a magnet to draw all the young foreigners together. Mr. Lynthorne knew very well where Raynham had picked up his objectionable acquaintance of the morning; and he knew better than many how easily the proverbial mischief for the idle hand could be found in a Chinese city, and he did not mean to let Raynham lead Greville into it unawares.

So Greville had to content himself with anticipation and hearsay. It was hard to know the club was making a racecourse for the ponies, because there were no grass-fields or roads about Hankow where they could be exercised, and never have a look. Well, after all that, to be twitted by Raynham, who was the real cause of his disappointment, with never having seen a horse, was enough to aggravate anybody.

CHAPTER XI.

MORNING BY THE RIVER.

GREVILLE got up early, and with the note for Monsieur Davydow in his pocket, hurried into the avenue, watching by Mr. Wymering's gate. He did not linger by it long without receiving an invitation to enter and join in a round at tennis. The merchant was taking his morning exercise; for tennis means health in China. Greville could only decline and move on. He drew to the river. The Russian might come by boat; he could watch both ways. The morning breezes rippled the surface of the yellow stream. He watched its sluggish flow with curious eyes. A man with a jar on his head was standing in the water catching birds. This was another of the Chinese peculiarities which Greville had not seen before. It called off his attention just for a minute or two. The man had walked down the shelving bank until the water reached his arms, so the birds which frequented the margin of the river scarcely noticed him. They only saw the grain which he had scattered at the bottom of his jar. Down they flut-

tered to peck it up. Once in the jar there was no room for them to spread their wings and soar aloft. Round and round they went, trying in vain to mount its straight and slippery sides. Greville watched the capture of a blackbird, and again surveyed the length of gravel and trees between him and the city gate. No Davydow. His eyes were wandering to the bird-catcher once more, when he caught sight of old Ting's sampan, idly drifting between the numerous junks and barges always crowding the mighty river of Golden Sand.

"It will be upset," thought Greville. "What can have happened to Ting? Was there no one to guide the boat?" Yes; his wife was steering, but she lacked the skill of her husband. The cormorants were having it all their own way. They were darting about in the water, straining their long strings to their utmost extent, and gobbling up the fish they caught instead of bringing them obediently to their master. One had broken loose, and was flying in wild delight at his recovered liberty right over the heads of his excited companions. Fo, the brownest of them all, was diving and splashing the faces of the rowers in the advancing bark, which was menacing the safety of the sampan. Little tottering Old-ah-you was leaning over the edge of the boat, screaming at the birds to try to call them to order. Up came Fo with a big perch in his beak. Old-ah-you began to tug at its line with all her might, to pull it back

to the boat. The bird was far stronger than the child. Over she went, head foremost, into the water. The rebellious cormorants screamed. The mother wrung her hands in despair, but the rowers near only gave a sidelong glance and grinned. Off went Greville's jacket, when a dog came rushing from the city, and plunged into the river as the child was sinking. The mother had got the boat-hook, and was trying to reach her. For a moment dog and child were under water. A howl arose from the sampan, when the dog reappeared, with Old-ah-you securely in his teeth. Down came the cormorants, darting at him with open beak, wheeling round and round, preparing to do battle for the possession of the child. Greville shouted to the dog to bid him hold fast, and cheered him on. It turned its head, and by the steady strokes of its vigorous fore-paws he saw it was making towards him. Then he knew it was his own brave Whang who was dodging the angry cormorants, and bringing the struggling, dripping child to his young master's feet. Greville's lavish praises reached the good dog's heart, breaking down the jealous suspicion with which he had regarded his foreign owner.

The boat was following in the dog's track; Greville saw old Ting crawl out of the gipsy-like tent on its deck, and call his birds to order. The poor fellow's bare shoulders were scored with dark-blue lines, from which the blood was oozing. Was it possible that it

was his old friend who was flogged in the market-place yesterday? Greville did not forget Raynham's note. He looked sharply up and down; no Davydow anywhere. Well, he must find out about Ting, and give back Old-ah-you to her parents. She was crying piteously; she could not stand alone. He put one arm round her and the other round his noble Whang, and waited until the boat came alongside, and the mother stepped upon the bank to reclaim the luckless child. She gave her a good shaking, and tossed her on the deck. It was nothing more in her eyes than a roll down a cottage step to an English mother.

"Why don't you get her a gourd-skin?" asked Greville.

Her knowledge of the all-useful pidgin was small, but she gave the usual Chinese reply, "Can do," which sometimes means the speaker understands what is said, and sometimes that a thing can be done. Greville was looking round for something to console poor Old-ah-you.

"Where is her doll?" he asked, remembering Cornelia's gift.

Ting turned towards him with a groan.

"Oh, that too plenty pretty for leetle dust-pan and hand-brush; I keepee that for myself."

"But what is the matter with yourself, Ting?"

The old man cried like a child as he explained. He was slow selling his fish in the city, people would not buy; and then he had to find a professional scribe

at one of the joss-houses, to write a letter for him to his father. Walking back to his boat, he lost his way, and took a wrong turning in the streets. The night-gong sounded, and the police took him for being abroad after nine o'clock. He was locked up all night, and beaten in the market-place the next morning. He gave the police all the money he had about him. It was so little they only laughed at it, but of course they took it, so he could not buy the gourd-skin. He could not work for a week to come. They should all be starved.

Greville was feeling in his pockets. He always carried a loose cash or two about with him. He knew an unexpected cash was the best comfort he could offer a Chinaman. He had but two. He turned to pat Whang's head whilst he was speaking, and saw the young Russian he was watching for sauntering towards the city gate with a bundle of lucern, from Mr. Wymering's garden, under his arm.

"It must be Davydow," thought Greville. "How can I have missed him? Quick, and I shall catch him yet."

Away he darted, with Whang tearing after him.

Greville was sure now it was Davydow, for he was almost up with him. But the Russian's long legs measured the ground so fast, he was inside the city gate, and Greville after him, almost without knowing it. Yes, he was on the wrong side of that hideous, invidious, painted mantle-piece. His hand brushed

the Russian's coat, when the policeman who watched the gate pushed him to one side of the narrow street, whilst Monsieur Davydow drew to the other. A chair was coming. He knew he must just wait to let it pass.

Greville did not look at the chair, or the coolies who were carrying it; he was trying to catch the Russian's eyes.

"Greville!" exclaimed Mr. Lynthorne, in his sternest tones.

The poor boy looked up into his father's face, and remembered he was on forbidden ground. It was only a step or two, but he was through the gate.

"Home this instant!" continued Mr. Lynthorne, slightly raising the large white sun-umbrella which had concealed him from Greville's view.

The boy turned round and retraced his steps without a word. Davydow passed on, and the note remained in Greville's pocket. Once beyond the city gates, the chair was soon alongside with him. How the coolies were looking! To disobey a father is a crime in Chinese eyes, and Greville knew it. The scarlet colour fled from his cheek, and his very lips grew white. This was humiliation. He could not explain why he was there without branding himself a tell-tale.

"Father," he said, "I am very sorry, but this shall never happen again. I never meant—"

This last word scarcely mended the matter in

Mr. Lynthorne's eyes, and he silenced him with a look. "Take your Latin grammar to your own room, and before you open it think over your last night's conversation, and see how it squares with this morning's conduct. Is this the sort of example you expect to lead a heathen child to a higher life? I tell you there is not a boy or girl in all the millions of China that would do what you have done this morning."

Greville could scarcely keep back the burning tears as he walked quietly away and fastened himself in his own room alone with his books, only hoping that no one would come near him. He shut the windows despite the heat, and seated himself where he could not be seen by any one passing. He did as his father desired him. He sat with his head in his hands, feeling more miserable every moment. How long the slow hours seemed. No one came near him. It would have been a relief to say "Go away" to Whang or Cornelia. He was left to himself so long he was convinced his mother must have gone out and taken Cornelia with her.

He had disregarded the luncheon-gong, not feeling as if he could eat, and now when he did make up his mind to open his door, it was all cleared away. But there lay Whang, with his head resting on his paws, waiting for Greville. He had waited for him there all day.

Chinese or English, a dog is a dog still—the

faithful friend that draws the closer as the clouds blacken. Oh, no one knew the comfort Whang was to him that dreary day.

Mr. Lynthorne shot a keen glance over his spectacles, as in due time he walked into his dining-room.

"Shut that dog out," he said, seating himself by the little table, on which Greville's books lay ready for examination. He took up the exercise. Not one error: that was well. When Greville was about half through with his recitation, Raynham walked in and out again rather restlessly.

Greville could not tell of his failure then, although he knew Raynham was kicking the tennis balls about the grass, expecting him to come and play as soon as the lesson was over. Of course he only wanted to know if his note had reached its destination. As Mr. Lynthorne closed the book, he detained his son with the abrupt question: "Have you ever entered the city without my knowledge before?"

"No, father; and I never will again," replied Greville.

"What induced you to do so this morning?" was the next inquiry.

Greville was mute. The dinner was on the table. Greville ate in silence. As his plate cleared, Mr. Lynthorne looked keenly at him. "Greville, you had better go to bed," he said.

The next morning Greville was up betimes, determined to get rid of the note. But Davydow was no-

where to be seen. He watched in vain. It was late when he returned. His mother remonstrated. "You know how unpunctuality vexes your father," she said; "you should be more careful."

Greville swallowed his breakfast with considerable chagrin. Everybody else had done. Cornelia stood by him talking of the baby. Had he forgotten his little Moses? Oh no! It must have a real name now. She wanted Daisy. Presently a loving arm went round his neck, and she whispered, "Father was not really vexed. He said, 'Where is Greville?' I jumped up to find you. Mother thought you had overslept yourself. Father answered, 'Greville was tired last night. He had a hard lesson, but he learned it like a man.'"

"Did he?" said Greville. "If he had known I was watching the city gate, what would he have said then?"

CHAPTER XII.

A THIRD TRY.

THE note lay like a load on Greville's conscience. "I'll give it to Davydow, as I said I would; but Raynham is not going to bring me into such a mess again."

But Greville was not out of the wood yet. Raynham begged a holiday, and went out to dinner with some new acquaintance he had made at the reading-room. "Who?" inquired Mr. Lynthorne. But satisfactory replies were not the fashion just then.

All the evening long Greville was practising Cornelia in the art of whistling through his favourite ivory whistle—an English treasure an uncle had sent him. It was shaped like a dog's head, and could give a call "if you like." Cornelia was under promise to exercise her new acquirement the next morning, just before breakfast, at the garden-gate.

With this safeguard Greville was out with the dawn. Orioles, skylarks, and thrushes were singing their gladsome matins. The river, looking more than ever like muddy pea-soup, crept sluggishly between

its banks. The fish were leaping in the sunshine, unconscious of an approaching foe in the graceful kingfisher skimming above the wide expanse.

"I shall do it the third time," said Greville, his natural spirit reviving within him.

An hour's watch and he was rewarded. Davydow was again taking his morning stroll through the English Concession. The friendly gate of Mr. Wymering's hong stood open to invite him to enter.

They saw the merchant's puggaree among his fruit-trees. He came up, spade in hand, to welcome his early visitor. Greville approached, lifted his hat to Davydow, and proffered the note, and had the enormous satisfaction of seeing it safely deposited in the young Russian's capacious pocket. He was running off again. Mr. Wymering called him back, confident that nothing could give a boy such real delight as a look at the Russian ponies. They were the general hobby. It made him feel a boy again, just to lay his hand once more on a horse's main.

Davydow smiled good-naturedly, and signified his willingness to give the English boy a ride. Greville's eyes sparkled, and then a sudden cloud fell over the boy's bright face. He had time to think whilst Mr. Wymering went on declaring it was sheer foolishness in a man of his age, but he had set his heart on importing a carriage and pair, just for the amusement of driving his wife up and down their own gravel. A pair of horses could be no other earthly use in that

part of China. So he planted and sowed to have food in readiness; but the pair never reached Hankow. "When you have to send eleven thousand miles for all you want, there is a good bit of waiting before you get it," the merchant concluded, with a laugh at the futility of his desires. Greville had made up his mind. It cost him a tremendous effort, but he spoke out resolutely,—

"Thanks so many, Mr. Wymering. I should like to go with you, but I must ask father if I may; and I cannot just now, I know, so I must not go."

"Well, well," returned Mr. Wymering, "the ponies won't run away—we look after them too well for that—and there are plenty of to-morrows before your young head. What is time to such as you? I make Monsieur Davydow fetch his lucern as he wants it, for the sake of the ten-minutes chat."

Greville shook hands, and ran off again with a lighter heart, long before the signal-whistle rang through the trees of the avenue.

"In time for chow-chow!" cried Cornelia merrily, "and time for tennis too. There is Mr. Raynham with a racket in his hand. I believe he means to have a game with us."

Greville ran up to him. "I have given the note to Monsieur Davydow at last," he said. "I could not happen upon him until this morning."

"This morning!" reiterated Raynham, as if he could not believe his ears. "You lout of a boy! You are

the biggest duffer I ever met with. Do you mean to tell me you have kept my reply-card in your pocket all this while? Why, the dinner-party was last night, and the card is not dated. Savignac will think I am inviting myself for to-morrow."

"Whatever shall I do?" exclaimed Greville, in utter despair.

"Do!" repeated the irritated Raynham. "Is there another boy anywhere who would want telling what to do? Run after Davydow, of course. Tell him it is a mistake, and get the note back. You will catch him if you look alive."

"I can't," said Greville toughly. "He is in the city by this time. I'll send one of the coolies, if you like."

Out came Mrs. Lynthorne to encourage the tennis-players. Raynham drew off from the game, wrote a few words in French, which his Russian friend could best understand, to request him not to send the note on to Savignac, but to return it to him by bearer, as there had been a mistake. He tossed the scrap of paper to Greville, who ran off to find one of the coolies, and then sat down to breakfast, trusting the matter was ended—for him at least. But a Chinese coolie is worse than a child for talking at the wrong time and to the wrong person. Greville had made the coolie understand his errand—he knew he had. The note was recovered. The coolie returned, and not seeing Greville, who was learning his lessons, he

carried the note straight to Mr. Lynthorne. He had been taught by Pao that every bit of European writing was of consequence, and must be taken at once to headquarters.

Mr. Lynthorne merely turned it over, read the address in his clerk's hand, with which he was now too familiar to mistake, and passed it over to him, carelessly inquiring of the coolie where it came from.

The lucid explanation, "Master Greville tellee go fetchee," threw light upon the unsatisfactory occurrences of the last few days.

Mr. Lynthorne was directing the unlading of some huge bars of packing-lead. He sent to Raynham for the invoice. As he received it from his clerk's hand, he observed in his quietest tones,—

"When you require a messenger, Mr. Raynham, there is always a coolie at your service, but I object to your making an errand-boy of my son."

Raynham stammered an apology, alleging as an excuse that he could not make the fellows understand him.

"What, not Pao! Well, at least I am always here to interpret for you," remarked Mr. Lynthorne.

"Yes, you are," thought Raynham, "like some old spider, with eyes all round you."

The mental effervescence within began to show itself in the rapid dash of his pen, the reckless splash of his ink. The paper on which he was writing was ready to drop to pieces from the excess of moisture

rained down upon it, as this increasing ferment added to the physical heat. A mosquito settled unnoticed on his wrist, leaving behind it twelve small crimson spots, which, before as many hours were over, would change into swollen lumps, with an amount of tormenting pain that would override every other sensation. From all these causes combined, his natural temperament had risen to spirit boil when he encountered Greville in the evening.

Like the rest of the little European world in Hankow, Mrs. Lynthorne was hurrying out to enjoy the cooling breeze.

Cornelia, with her gloves in her hand, ran back to the nursery for a parting kiss to baby's rounding cheek.

"Missee," said Pao, in his softest voice, as he pointed to the garden, "too plenty boy; bad look see."

Cornelia peeped out through the beautiful climbers which darkened her windows with their wealth of leaves.

It was Raynham who was speaking. "You sneaking cad! Call yourself an English boy! Once set your foot on an English playground, and you would get the kicking you deserve. So you are my errand-boy! then take your pay with a punch on your head, and go and blab to your daddy as often as you like. I'll be even with you."

"Come on then," returned Greville, setting his back against the garden wall, and striking back the threatening fist which Raynham had doubled in his face.

Away flew Cornelia, beckoning to Pao to follow her, through Greville's room into the central court, where Whang was fuming in his kennel. She twisted his chain round and round her hand, as she persuaded Pao to loosen it from the staple. All fear of the dog had vanished in the greater dread that her father would walk upon them before she could get her brother away.

"Stand back, Pao," she whispered. "Whang and I shall stop them better than anybody."

She gathered up the long chain in one hand, and slipped the other in the big dog's collar, as she stepped out under the veranda.

"Grevie!" she called, with her back towards him, as if she had not seen what they were doing, "mother is in such a hurry! Run round quick, dear, and see if her chair is ready."

Whang gave a low, deep growl. Raynham drew back beyond the reach of his chain, which Cornelia was slowly dropping on the grass, as she led her furry policeman across the recent battle-ground. Greville picked up his hat, and slouching it over his blackened eye, walked off to the gate rather than meet her face to face.

"Where are you bound for, Miss Cornelia?" asked Raynham. "Have you got a permit for enacting Beauty and the Beast? Mr. Lynthorne is coming. Had not you better take the dog out of the way?"

"I have just brought him out of the way of the

cooking-fires. I want to chain him to one of these trees while they are burning, but I cannot quite manage it. I must lead him about till Pao comes," she answered, giving her formidable companion the full length of his chain, until Raynham, who knew the dog's eye was upon him, went off in another direction. It was impossible to follow Greville to the gate.

Pao came out of his ambush shaking with laughter. "The leetle missee want no helpee. She wearee red coral button of mandarin general."

Choosing a very brilliant scarlet star from the countless flowers around them, he stuck it in the top of Cornelia's hat crown, to imitate the distinguishing insignia of the first military class among the Chinese.

"Can see," he went on, laughing with all his heart, "dis leetle missee come from de land de Queen does rule. No likee that in all China."

CHAPTER XIII.

WINTER IN CHINA.

SUMMER had faded; the mandarin ducks had resumed their glorious plumage. Their little driver, with his bare feet, shivered in his old blue rags, as he drove his feathered flock from fallow to fallow, counting the hours when he might lead them back to their floating home, because he every now and then contrived to give them a lengthened sail beneath the lovely trees of the English Concession. More than once he had caught a glimpse of a happy baby face in an ama's arms. A face so round and yellow, with the dress of a foreign infant, must be the little sister's; but how changed since he saw it last! The vision of the tea-garden with its muddy ditch rose up before him, and he seemed to hear again the strange voices of the children of the fung-yang as they picked up the baby and carried her away. All he wanted was one "good look see," to make quite sure she was alive and well. And then he would knock his head on the ground, hoping that his grandfather and great-grandfather, who had been dead long years before he was born, would

take care of them both. Before the duck-boy was sold, he used to go with his father to burn incense-sticks at their graves; and like a true Chinese he clung to the old ways, and said his chin-chin to them every night.

Pao bought copy after copy of the *Pekin Gazette*, as the cold increased, to see if the emperor's edict was out ordering his loving subjects to put on their winter clothes. Marweh grumbled all day long at the thinness of her muslins; but not a man, woman, or child "under heaven," as they fondly designate their beloved China, would dream or dare to put on a thicker shoe or a warmer vest without the emperor's commands. It was a trying period to Mrs. Lynthorne, for the good-tempered coolies grew cross with each other, and a general comfortlessness prevailed; until one joyful morning, when Pao stood elate in the midst of the doleful circle, eating their morning chow-chow, and announced the glad news which the *Gazette* in his hand contained. The edict was out at last. He began slowly to read the quaintly-printed Chinese characters; but his jubilant auditors scarcely waited to hear it through. There was a general stampede throughout the hong: white-robed clerks popped out of the office with a pen behind their ear to take a peep at the welcome page. Away went coolie and clerk to the clothier and hatter, who were already driving a brisk trade. Some of the more provident had stowed away a convenient bundle in an empty chest, in some quiet corner of the capacious warehouses,

which were soon transformed into a vast cloaking-room. Long wadded garments, sheepskin coats, cloth-lined hats, were brought forth with joyous celerity. The duteous Celestials swathed themselves from head to foot with the warmest, thickest clothing they could procure. Each one looked ready for a journey to the frozen zone; for the Chinaman revels in warmth, and trusts in wadding and fur to get him through the bitterest cold. A fire for anything but cooking is an unheard of extravagance around Hankow; so the universal wrapping up went on to Raynham's amazement. Mr. Lynthorne turned back from the office-steps; no business would be done that morning. Even he could play a game at tennis with the children.

"As you will," retorted Mrs. Lynthorne, her cheery good-temper fairly giving way under the provocation. She had been tried for the last fortnight. Her numerous household had gone about their work so pinched and shivering there was no comfort to be had; and now they were rushing to the other extreme, bundling themselves up until they would not know how to move.

> "'Thy best help is in quiet, gentle Nell:
> I pray thee, sort thy heart to patience,'"

answered her husband, quoting old Gloucester's exhortation to Eleanor Cobham. "No one should ever come out here without a good stock of that most

excellent commodity," he went on, tapping the baby in Cornelia's arms on its cheek and forehead.

Goat's milk and Ridge's food were doing far more for the infant than for its amateur nurse, who, after the enervating summer, shrank like a sensitive plant from the advance of winter. Mr. Lynthorne feared the baby was growing too heavy for her, so he let her set it on his own knee. A finger was held up to Greville, who left Raynham to his mother, and came across.

"We must not grudge those poor fellows the time to put their clothes on," said Mr. Lynthorne, "seeing they will not take them off again all winter. It is a clear saving of time, as Pao assured me. Not a garment will be laid aside until their emperor issues another edict, permitting them to undress, and change again to their cottons. Well, it is a time for making changes. You are not getting on as fast as I want to see you, my boy." Greville looked alarmed. His father proceeded: "I have no more time to give you, do as I will; so I have asked Mr. Frohawk, our new chaplain, to take you in hand. He will try to give you a couple of hours most days. It is an advantage I hardly expected to be able to secure for you, and you must make the most of it, Greville. He has had local fever like our Raynham, and he is working hard at Chinese; so you are not to bother him. There must be no inattention, no negligence. You have shown me how you can work, and here is your chance. It is better than sending you away to England. We

do not want eleven thousand miles between us just yet. When my holiday year comes round," added Mr. Lynthorne (for the poor overworked charsee did have his holiday once in seven years), "we will all go together, and you will be ready to take your place on an English form, and hold your own in the class. If I leave you behind, that will not be like sending you alone to strangers."

Greville's breath was almost taken away, but his eyes spoke for him; it was Cornelia's heart that failed. "If Grevie were left behind in England, what should I do?" she asked.

"You will not be quite alone now," answered her father. "Baby will be a nice little companion by that time. It will not be for a year or two; but we must all look forward, and put the oil in the lamp before we want to light it, my dear.—And now, Mr. Raynham, I hear a general stampede; we had better be going."

It was a very characteristic speech. Mr. Lynthorne was one of those indefatigable workers who are apt to forget the rest they so willingly forego is wished for by their subordinates. Chinese industry kept pace with his own, but Raynham between the two felt himself continually spurred forward. His health was returning with the colder weather, and Mr. Lynthorne, who believed there was nothing like work to keep the lad out of mischief, no longer spared him. The idle weeks of his convalescence, and the

many indulgences on the score of health, were no longer necessary; but Raynham was loath to give them up. His own friend, Captain Axon, shrewdly suspected many things that Greville alone was sure of. His ship was about to sail; and when Mr. Lynthorne led the way towards the office, he encountered him sauntering round the deserted region, wondering what on earth had become of its swarming inmates. He had a little parting advice to bestow on his young friend, and a few words of warning for his employer.

"Are my papers ready?" inquired the captain. Raynham was despatched to find them. As he opened the door of the inner room reserved for Mr. Lynthorne's private use, he was surprised to find Greville there before him.

"I'm on old Tom Tittler's ground," returned the boy, as usual nettled by the uncomplimentary "You here?" with which he was greeted. The door was held open for him to pass out; but Greville, who had sedulously avoided being alone with Raynham for so long, thought this looked too much like being turned out, and resolved to remain. "If you want to know my business here," he laughed, "of course it is picking up gold and silver—the latter in particular."

"You ridiculous ass!" exclaimed Raynham, as he watched Greville flourishing Pao's feather-brush, preparing to sweep every dint and break in the surface of the well-used chopping-block, as he collected the weekly contribution to baby's fortune.

"I should like to see you in a fives-court with the conceit taken out of you," remarked Raynham, as he fitted the key into Mr. Lynthorne's desk.

"Know just what I should feel like by experience, don't you?" asked Greville, pouring the silver-dust into a small bag, which Cornelia had manufactured for the purpose.

Mr. and Mrs. Lynthorne had advised them to give the baby a Chinese name; so after a while both Moses and Daisy were abandoned, and the grand-sounding name of Koh-pin-leen, which Pao suggested, was duly chosen. But by common consent it was usually shortened to Koh-pi. So Cornelia had marked her bag with a large red K on either side, to denote its owner.

Greville congratulated himself on the rapidity with which it was filling. He was weighing it with great exactness.

"Bother it!" exclaimed Raynham suddenly: "I have forgotten all about these invoices that I was to have copied last night. There is a nuisance!"

"As the conceit is not out of me yet," put in Greville, "I should say it would not be much of an affair to copy them now."

"I only wish you had it to do," retorted Raynham, giving a long-drawn whistle, expressive of perplexity.

"If I had it to do, I'd do it, and whistle when it was finished," was the retort.

"Oh, you would, would you?" sneered Raynham. "I'd like to see you."

He took the bundle of papers required, and went out. On his return he found Greville whistling noisily as he executed a sort of war-dance round the chopping-block, beating time with Koh-pi's bag of treasure.

"What is up now?" demanded Raynham.

"It is the conceit that is in me getting the upper hand!" shouted Greville, as he marched off to display his gleanings to Cornelia.

Raynham walked up to the desk, to discover his copying done for him with a Chinese fidelity of imitation; he might almost have thought it was his own writing.

The right hand of fellowship must be held out to Greville after that; he really was too useful to be quarrelled with.

Whilst this was taking place inside the office, Captain Axon was regretting that Raynham had been left so much to himself at his first entrance into Chinese life.

"When hard work and *ennui* go hand in hand, as they do here," he said, "a young fellow is often driven into mischief for a little diversion. You will look after him, Lynthorne. When a lad of his age suddenly exchanges a school-boy's allowance for three hundred a year, it is a leap forward—too high a leap to be taken at one bound, in my opinion. There are no field-sports to be had here; and if he seeks amusement in the city, we know what the Chinese are, with all their sobriety and industry: they are a nation of gamblers.

They lay bets over everything. If they know he is going about with his pockets full of money, they will soon empty them for him."

Mr. Lynthorne wrung his friend's hand, and promised him faithfully to do a father's part by the lad. "As for his money," he said, "I have persuaded him to leave it in my hands, and only draw it as he wants it. He will have too much to do, now his health is better, to waste time in the city. We make him one of us. I think he is settling down."

But there was an added care on Mr. Lynthorne's brow when the captain departed; and the task of making their home attractive occupied a good deal of Mrs. Lynthorne's attention. They were both so willing to overlook small things, that neither of them cared to inquire how matters stood between Raynham and Greville. Mr. Lynthorne believed he had stopped the mischief at the beginning. That day of wretchedness was still a secret between himself and Greville, to which neither of them ever alluded. But it had decided him to arrange the daily lessons with Mr. Frohawk; whilst Mrs. Lynthorne suggested some gymnastic exercises which Raynham might like to join.

But despite all these manlier sports and lengthened tasks, Koh-pi's dust-bag grew in size. An important event was pending. Mother had said it was time to put the baby into short frocks; but, alas! the remains of Cornelia's infantine dresses had all been reduced to rags and dust by the industrious spiders.

"We are ready," said Greville, in tones of intense satisfaction. "We've got the oil in the lamp, Cornelia. I have silver enough to buy her all she wants."

"And I can make them," returned his sister, when a grave question suddenly presented itself. Was Koh-pi to be English or Chinese? Ought Cornelia to make her a pinafore like one of her own, or a short tunic and full drawers like Marweh? Greville, who had heard the arguments of the Italian sisters, was decidedly for keeping to the Chinese.

"But," objected Cornelia, "Marweh is so ugly! I do not want to make Koh-pi look like her. Chinese ladies wear long skirts as well as the men, and Koh-pi will be a lady, won't she, Grevie dear? I should not wish her to be too Chinese—not like Marweh in all things."

Greville shut up his books with a bang, and tossed back his hair from his forehead. "Pray, Cornelia, don't talk about her as if she were a live doll. It is all very well now, but I am thinking of the life before her. If she should go back to her own people, we want them to love her and admire her."

"Of course we do; but we ought not to spend her silver in buying frocks, because she may want it very badly if we all go to England. Do you think we may take her with us?" suggested Cornelia.

"We shall not go yet for a long while," observed Greville, as if he thought the question irrelevant.

Cornelia walked to the window; it was covered

now with silk gauze. They could see through this; but Mrs. Lynthorne was complaining of the cold wind it admitted: it would have to be changed for horn or oiled calico, as the cold increased. But no one wanted to make the transfer; it made the rooms as dull as if the blinds were always down.

"There is the duck-barge!" cried Greville, pointing to the long row of coops on the deck of one of the many vessels crowding the river.

Now the leaves were off the trees, they had a splendid view of the majestic stream. There were barges of all sorts—imperial barges collecting the taxes, which are paid in kind: so many bags of rice and other grains, so many bales of cotton and silk. Then there were the money-barges, carrying copper cash, to supply the banks; the salt-barges, piled high with their precious burden, which is so expensive in China—salted food is rarely indulged in. After them came the coal-barges, which were doing a thriving trade now the winter had fairly begun. It was not real coal, such as we use in England, but coal-dust mixed with peat, to make it go farther. Then there were the junks and passenger-boats; and slowly sailing in the midst of them came the merry flock of ducks, with the ragged boy in blue on his primitive raft.

"Let us open the window a minute and show him Koh-pi!" exclaimed Cornelia, darting off to fetch the baby from Marweh; whilst Greville undid the

latch, or rather wooden bar, slid through two staples —the only sort of fastening used in China for doors or windows. They danced Koh-pi, who could now sit upright, to attract his attention. He stood on his block of wood and pointed to her with his long bamboo. They saw his naked feet, so blue and cold, while every other Chinaman in sight was swathed in such an amount of wraps and robes they looked like moving bales of cotton.

"Has not he got a warm coat for the winter?" they asked each other; adding quickly, "Would not it be nice to let Koh-pi send him one? It would make him love her, and that is what we want. Could we spare silver enough for that? How much would it cost?"

Their discussion was interrupted by the duck-boy's extravagant expressions of delight, as the baby crowed and clapped her little hands to Greville's whistle.

In a moment the well-trained ducks huddled together in so close a cram, that the water around the boy and his raft looked like a sheet of moving wings. A passenger-boat was steering into their midst. The raft and boat seemed almost to touch. A woman seated in the stern looked round. The boy threw up his arms with a wild cry, and pointed to the dancing baby in the window of the hong. Could it be their mother?

CHAPTER XIV.

WINTER AMUSEMENTS.

THE decision was reached at last. The duck-boy must have his coat. But as Koh-pi's dust must be changed into cash to pay for it, Greville and Cornelia decided to club together and buy it for her. Cornélia was anxious to know how much dust they had already; so Greville carried off his bag into the office, to watch for a chance to get it weighed.

"Here comes my new patent copying-machine," said Raynham, looking up from his desk. "It need not rust for want of work."

He held out a pen by way of invitation. Greville gave the scale a jerk and spilt his precious dust. Oh provocation!

"There go Koh-pi's shoes!" he exclaimed dolefully. "I'll be off to the cooking-fires to melt it, if I can get hold of a ladle. This will never do."

"Hard up for a cash?" asked Raynham, flinging a handful towards him. "You might help me a bit."

Raynham always had his desk in the inner room

now the weather was cold, so they were alone. Greville pushed back the cash. Was it a bribe? He had copied the invoices partly to tease and partly to shame his companion. He had no mind to repeat it to please him, so off he ran.

The next day the coat was procured. Pao was coaxed into writing a little letter in Chinese, to tell the duck-boy who had sent it to him.

The day was a busy one. Mr. Lynthorne had sent for a carpenter from the city, to put up a mast in the garden, and erect a tier of circular bars and a horizontal pole. In all the gymnastic exercises for which these were preparing, Greville must follow Raynham's lead, for he did not even know what they were. He was divided in mind between pride and longing, and would not show the interest he felt.

"What makes Greville so awkward?" asked his mother. "I thought he would have been delighted with the prospect of all this leaping and climbing."

Greville felt that she was vexed when he ran off with Whang to the boating-stairs the minute Raynham appeared. Greville did not mean to be provoking, but it looked like it. Through the customary noise and clamour by the river, he had heard the shrill call from the duck-barge, and knew that Koh-pi's brother would soon be in sight.

Opening the window last night had given Cornelia cold, and she might not go with him. He rolled up the coat into a bundle and gave it to Whang to carry.

He saw the splendid flock come sailing in, with their crests erect and their fans well spread, keeping their ranks like soldiers, all except one incorrigible drake, who was gobbling up a floating cabbage-leaf dropped by one of the house-boats. The duck-boy threatened him with the loss of his supper, and with a few repentant quacks he scrambled up the side of the barge after his companions, who were hurrying into their respective coops. When the last duck was out of the water, Greville tossed his ball on to the boy's raft before he left it, and then bade Whang take the coat after it, and bring the ball back. Whang turned one ear and looked in Greville's face, as if the order puzzled him. As the boy repeated it he plunged into the river, dived under the prow of a junk where chin-chin was beginning, but appeared again on the other side, swerving at the flash of the crackers, and finally reaching the raft with his burden.

"Dead!" shouted Greville, and the coat was laid at the duck-boy's feet. Whang shook the muddy drops from his shaggy hair, giving the dazed child an unpleasant shower-bath, and returned to his master with the ball, to receive the praise he deserved, and the reward of a bone, which had been stored in Greville's pocket for the occasion. Whang thought of showing his gratitude for the *bonne bouche* by starting off to fetch the coat back again; and to make him change his purpose, Greville had to rush up the slippery steps, flinging no end of sticks and stones in an

opposite direction, which Whang duly collected as they went along.

The hong in its winter dress lost nothing of its charm. Its dim and dreary atmosphere was increased. The windows, with their panes of gauze, shut out as much light as they admitted. The many lamps which Mrs. Lynthorne kept burning all day cast bright floods of radiance on the polished floors, and threw the distant corners into darker shadow, making the grotesque china dragons and nodding mandarins which adorned her rooms look as if they were endowed with life and movement. A fire in China is more or less of a failure for want of better fuel than their cakes of coal and peat. It is always smouldering and dirty, covering everything with dust. Yet she could not do without it, for the cold winds blew in at every crack and crevice of the slightly-built house. It made the Chinese servants laugh more than ever to see their "missisee" making such a fuss about a little draught, when all the world knew if she had but dressed herself properly she would not have felt it. Well, it was a pity she had not sense enough to make herself comfortable. Look what tight, wretched sort of clothes these English wore! and then they were always taking them off, to make the matter worse! Why, even a child might know the night was colder than the day, and yet these stupid fung-yang took all off every night. The climax was reached when they discovered a duck-like propensity to splash

about in cold water. A Chinaman hates cold water; he never tastes it, never touches it if he can help it.

Pao went about the house trying to enlarge the poor English lady's ideas, for the little missee was shivering. He pasted oiled calico and paper over every draught-hole, and finally persuaded Mr. Lynthorne to let him warm Cornelia's room in the Chinese fashion. The workmen were called off from the mast and the parallel bars to erect a *kang*—that is, a dais about half-a-yard high, with a perforated floor, under which the fire was lighted. Cushions were placed round the edge, and a little table about a foot high set in the centre, ready for use. At night this was to be taken away and Cornelia's little mattress spread in its place, with plenty of Witney blankets and an English pillow. When Mr. Lynthorne came in to inspect it, he found Cornelia perched on one of the cushions, working at a frock for the baby with untiring industry. The kang was about the size of a dining-table, and occupied the middle of the room. Cornelia sang its praises so warmly it became a general rendezvous. Mrs. Lynthorne brought her knitting, and Mr. Lynthorne his paper, to test its capabilities. Koh-pi tumbled on a cushion in the middle, revelling like a true Chinese in the genial warmth it diffused.

The worn-out charsee lay back among the pillows and shawls brought out to air at the spare corners, and closed his eyes. Two heads appeared at the

door, and Greville, all elate, exclaimed cheerily, "The first step is taken. We've done it, Whang and I."

Cornelia gave an answering chirrup of delight, and held out her work for admiration.

"That will do," said Greville: "now we must plan about her shoes."

Mrs. Lynthorne was beginning to speak; but their father whispered, "Let them alone; let them manage and plan. Constancy of purpose, forethought, thrift, and decision are the kind of things that only grow by exercise, and a man makes no mark in the world without them. This little bundle of humanity is educating them in a way I never dreamed of. Keep an eye over them, but let them see what they can do."

Mrs. Lynthorne nodded and knitted away a little faster, until Greville went off to chain up Whang. Then a motherly hand was laid on his shoulder, and a bright voice promised, "If my boy can climb the mast by the spring, he shall have his own gun, and go shooting with father."

She did not understand her boy's reluctance to the bars and poles, which Raynham was scrutinizing and altering with such eagerness. She only saw in them a necessary counteractive against the enervating influences of the climate, from which her children were suffering.

Greville ran out to have a look at what was being done. Raynham knew that his mother had sent him, and he was not slow to take the advantage.

The brief Chinese winter sped away, and the old friendship was restored, as Raynham opened up to Greville a new world of boyish delight, and every service exacted in return seemed small by comparison.

The gymnastics were a success upon which Mrs. Lynthorne plumed herself. They became a rallying-point in the Concession. Mr. Presgrave ran in for an hour's exercise now and then; Davydow tried his leaping powers; and even Mr. Frohawk made an attempt at climbing the mast, under Greville's guidance. Grinning coolie faces peeped from the hong court, and well-shaven Chinese heads watched at the office windows, to see those mad English doing coolie's work without even coolie's pay.

Only the little prisoner on her kang saw nothing of the wonderful performances; but Koh-pi had taken her first step, and greeted Cornelia with a long-drawn "Moo." The Joseph's coat, as Greville called the dress Cornelia had made, was worn daily; and although Raynham would ask after the little mountebank, and Cornelia herself believed that she should make a much better dress next time, Greville and old Ting, to whose astonished eyes it had been exhibited, never wavered in their admiration.

Mrs. Presgrave sent a stock of new materials to the little dressmaker—soft China silk and figured cotton—pieces big enough to make a better dress; and mother cut the pattern. But to be always in one room, with

a window of horn that nobody can see through, is weary work. Baby was like a little sunbeam, with her funny ways, taking more and more notice every day. All Cornelia's playthings were at her service; but it was Greville's humming-top that took the wee thing's fancy. Hands and feet went dancing in an ecstasy of delight to see it spinning. Once she snatched the bag from Greville's hand, and shook her own silver, now safely melted into little balls. It was a novel rattle, and a reigning favourite. Greville set up his loom, and under Marweh's tuition wove his first web. It was loose: Cornelia, who watched the progress of every thread, was obliged to admit that. But mother said it would make a capital piece of straining-cloth for jelly, so it was of real use.

Greville had no time to be dull. As his muscles strengthened with the daily climb, so his mind developed with the daily lesson with the scholarly chaplain, Mr. Frohawk.

Greville was getting on, as Mr. and Mrs. Lynthorne contentedly remarked, when they mourned over Cornelia's precarious health.

Never was spring more welcome. Even Mr. Lynthorne prepared for a snatch of holiday before the exhausting efforts of the tea-market again began.

A few days' snipe-shooting over the fallows round Hankow, with Raynham and Greville for his companions, were telling upon his jaded nerves; but they came to an abrupt conclusion. He might roam the

fields at his own free will, and birds were plentiful; but the army of Chinese urchins which started into life at the first report of his gun, turn which way he would, frightened him. Greville, with his new gun on his shoulder, according to his mother's promise, was eagerly waiting for his first shot. On they walked, through the never-ending maze of rice and millet and beans, all unable to escape their ragged following. A splendid covey of birds flew up from the green corn; and Raynham, who scarcely knew how to handle a gun, aimed at the foremost, and hit "a biped," as he exclaimed in momentary consternation.

"A boy," repeated Mr. Lynthorne, in his clear-cut tones, that spoke volumes to Greville's ears. Whang darted forward. The coolie carrying their game-bag ran; but Mr. Lynthorne was before them. He signed to Raynham and Greville to fall back, as an ever-increasing crowd of Chinese gathered round him, yelling and gesticulating. A shower of cash set up a more friendly feeling. The hurt was not a serious one—a few small shot had entered the child's arm. The coolie was interpreter. Mr. Lynthorne tore up his handkerchief and stopped the flow of blood. He thought he was surgeon enough to manage a bandage, and his rough and ready proceedings were as good as a puppet-show to the curious Chinamen, and a cry of "*Hao!*" (good) greeted his success.

Raynham began to exculpate himself.

"The blame is my own," said Mr. Lynthorne, "for

bringing you here." And he marched them homewards by the nearest route.

"No more boy-shooting for any of us," he observed, as they entered the hong; and he took their guns from them, and carried them into his most private sanctum.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked Raynham, with a brow of thunder.

"Oh," retorted Greville, with a reproachful sigh, "we shall never be trusted with a gun again."

"We!" repeated Raynham scornfully. "You should have seen how Savignac would have quieted that yelping crew. If I had been alone it would have taken a different tune, I can tell you."

"Ah yes!" retorted Greville; "run them up to riot-pitch in no time. See you doing it!"

CHAPTER XV.

ENNUI.

THE rough side of Raynham's temper showed itself for many a long day after. To Mr. Lynthorne he was taciturn and moody, to Greville he was simply exasperating. The angry flash in the boy's quick eye, and the sharp retort which sprang to his lip, could not pass unnoticed in his mother's presence—a look that no one else could see. A gentle finger stroking his burning cheek would bring a sudden fit of repentance; and with Greville to repent was to atone. He would slip into the office, as the heat increased, doing "sub's" work, as he called it, under Raynham's direction; making his exit through the window, as became a rising gymnast.

Although Raynham accredited Mr. Lynthorne with spider's eyes, he was too much absorbed with the tea-market beginning to observe the by-play.

His correspondence-clerk got through a fair amount of work, and he was satisfied—nay more, thankful—for any relief from the burden of the preceding year.

Cornelia alone divined how matters stood, and had

the sense to see and say nothing, although she missed her brother's constant companionship. When Raynham's voice grew crosser than usual, she found a fresh play-fellow for herself and Koh-pi in Whang. They visited his kennel daily, with welcome gifts of bones and biscuit. If he had condescended to accept Cornelia's caresses, and yielded to her entreaties, he was Koh-pi's devoted slave. The little toddler might pull his curly tail, or hold him by ear or collar, make a dab at his eyes, or even push her little fat hand between those formidable teeth, as often as she liked. Cornelia could not coax permission to let him roam about unchained, but she found out ever so many cool retreats, where she was persuaded he would be much more comfortable than in his kennel; and Mrs. Lynthorne agreed with her. Pao fixed a few handy staples into the garden-wall, so that Whang might be chained where the grass was fresh and soft and the trees were shadiest. So Whang had many walks with his little mistress, as he always seemed to prefer a very roundabout route to reach his kennel at night or leave it in the morning; and two black paws were often seen on the window-sill of the office. If any remonstrance was offered, Cornelia always asserted she knew by his bark when Whang was feeling the sun, and she was just taking him to a shadier corner. The three were often seen together, watching the wonderful performances on mast and bars, when the heat of the day was over; and Whang and Koh-pi

begged to stay a little longer. Even Greville did not divine the secret motive that prompted all those apparent vagaries, although he often said, "What a coward Raynham is! he daren't lay a finger on me if Whang's about."

Cornelia was so ill all the summer that no one cared to cross her. Mr. Lynthorne looked grave at first when Whang's black head appeared amongst the peonies; but no harm came of it, and as she seemed to find so much delight in the dog's company, he let it pass.

Greville asserted Whang was a true patriot—stood fast by his country. It was Koh-pi's influence that was taming him. His merry little grasshopper was beginning her good work early—teaching better ways to dogs at first, and then to men by-and-by. It was an earnest of what she would do in after-life amongst her own people.

These reflections led him to the conclusion that it was high time to begin to teach her himself. Koh-pi's baby chatter was a funny combination of her little moo's English and Marweh's Chinese, to which she naturally inclined. This was a source of exceeding pride and satisfaction to Greville. "She is learning two languages for one, all by nature. Look what that is!—You need not laugh, Mr. Raynham; if you got a peep into Mr. Frohawk's study as I do, you would know its value. When I walk in with my books under my arm, he does not hear me coming;

but I hear a sigh like that" (giving a despairing heave of the chest), "and I pick up odd bits of paper covered with Chinese letters. Do I want him to tell me it is tough work? Father has never even tried to learn it; but to Koh-pi it will be no trouble at all. I wonder whether she will find it as easy to translate from one to the other."

"I believe she is very clever," said Cornelia, with an earnestness she thought would carry conviction with it. But even father laughed; and Raynham asked if they were sure they had hit upon the right educational mixture—three parts English to two Chinese—to make a Pekin saint. Of course they would send her straight to the emperor's palace. Would not it be as well, if he might suggest, to send a special courier to inform his imperial majesty of the living wonder that was preparing, and then he would have time to put up a *peilos* in her honour? Was not that the right name for the three gaudily-painted gateways that had just been stuck up in Hankow streets, to commemorate their recent governor?

"Come; you put me in spirits!" cried Greville. "The best plans that ever were made in the world have been followed by a laughing chorus. You do not realize how used I am getting to being laughed at."

One morning Mr. Lynthorne announced his intention to take them all for a sail on the river, to rest their eyes from the everlasting flatness of the Hankow fields.

Since the abrupt conclusion of the snipe-shooting, there had been little to break in upon the flavourless monotony of office days. Mrs. Lynthorne had been looking round for something new. No one doubted where the suggestion originated. She had found at last a pleasure in which all could share.

A house-boat was engaged, and every one was anticipating the queer sights which awaited them. Like every European sailing along the mighty river of Golden Sand, they could not shake off the impression that some strange land of dreams had suddenly become real.

At last they passed the Hankow plain, and hoped to escape from its unvarying sameness; for now the river wound between naked crags and precipitous mountains, but all so alike that the old feeling of dreary monotony arose again, stronger than ever.

"Always the same eternal sameness!" exclaimed Raynham.

"Ay, my lad, that is China," answered Mr. Lynthorne. "We might sail on for a fortnight, hemmed in like this on either hand, until we emerged into the low-lands again, where swamps, lakes, and morasses are all huddled together."

"It must be nature's sorting-house," said Greville—"everything of a kind packed together."

"With one superior portion of hill and dale round Pekin, to which those war-ships working so steadily against the stream are returning," added his father.

"Oh!" cried Raynham, with a heartiness which disturbed Mrs. Lynthorne's peace, "I hate the place and I hate the people; as the old Jesuits truly said of them, 'they are all made of the same metal, all cast in the same mould, and everywhere they swarm.'"

"I have brought you," said Mr. Lynthorne, fixing his telescope for the lads' amusement, "that you may realize the queer nature of the land where we have made our home. Count the crowds of men we see as we pass, a thousand or more in a group, and not a woman among them. It is men—men everywhere, and all at work. We may count the cities, too, with their lofty walls, the big towns, the overgrown villages, but you cannot count the crowded hamlets, the clusters of mud hovels, that fill up every vacant spot. Not a ledge in these rocks above us, not an islet in the morass below, but owns its patriarchal home, where generations of bare-headed, pig-tailed Chinamen have lived and died."

But in spite of all these denunciations, Mrs. Lynthorne was filling her sketch-book—now with one of the small military guard-houses, which are stationed about every ten or twelve miles all over China, with a handful of soldiers parading in their paper helmets and quilted petticoats, who used their fans with energy, and punctiliously fell on their knees if an officer appeared. Chinese ideas of military duty are very different from ours. Their generals sit in arm-chairs behind their troops during a battle; so what can we

expect from the men? Then Mrs. Lynthorne turned with genuine admiration to the bridges spanning the numerous canals which were fed by the mighty river —bridges of every shape and size conceivable, and all so slight and picturesque she knew not which to choose.

The waterways of China seem a world by themselves, with their countless shoals of ducks and floating homes; for as many families live upon the Chinese rivers as we can number in our British Isles. Every canal and river has a barge of its own, as different from each other as they all are different from everything else of the kind in other parts of the world.

Mrs. Lynthorne's sketch-book was filling fast, when Cornelia, who sat at her feet entranced, pointed to the terraced hills in the distance, each one surmounted with a clump of trees or tall storied pagoda. But last, not least, came the tombs, always the most striking objects in a Chinese landscape—all varying in shape and form. Sometimes they resembled elevated terraces, supported by semicircular walls, or round hillocks, graduated in size, according to the age and rank of the silent sleepers within. Then again they were adorned with every kind of ornamental architecture, from the lowly tent-shaped roof to the loftiest column.

No Western memories, no longings for the land that is very far off, disturbed Cornelia's enjoyment, and when her father called her to take her turn at

the telescope her delight was at its zenith. But Greville saw the shadow cross the sunshine of his mother's smile, and hovered round her when she expressed her sympathy with the homesick Raynham, and her fear that he would throw up the distasteful life. "Grevie," she added, "you are always mother's boy. You will help her; you will do what you can to make Mr. Raynham contented."

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ALARM.

THE lagging weeks crept by and slowly grew to months. The changing seasons followed each other. The gardens were white with the *tcha-wha*, or tea-flower, the beautiful *Camellia sasanqua*. Raynham turned from the sight with loathing, for it told him that the hateful weeks of harvest were again at hand. He was one of those who never can see that whoever takes the great leap must be ready for the little jump. He had left old England exulting in having secured the lucrative post, with very vague ideas about the life before him. Few people do know much about China. He had adorned the prospect with imaginary brilliants nowhere to be found in the reality. He might have crushed them like bits of painted glass beneath his foot, and walked above them to the good within his grasp. He had not the manhood to stand by his choice, and pay the cost, and do his duty. When the little jump was required, he drew back loftily—"I never expected this; I was not prepared for that."

There was no glitter left to allure him on, no enthusiasm to keep his purpose warm. There was nothing in him to resist the homesickness that gathered strength as time rolled on. He sought escape from himself by any outlet, good or bad. Health and temper were giving way again. Nobody knew how often Greville helped the lame dog over the stile.

After dragging through week after week in this unsatisfactory fashion, Raynham declared one morning he was too ill for anything. When Greville returned from his lessons with Mr. Frohawk, he found him lolling listlessly on his circular bamboo chair.

"Greville," said Raynham rather piteously, "I'm done up. I have a great mind to try a sail on the river, if you will go with me. If I am like this now in April, what shall I do when the heat begins?"

"And what will father do?" thought Greville.

The softened light, the waving fans across the ceiling, the sweet scent of the Arabian jessamine that covered the veranda, had all lost their charm in Raynham's eyes. He had hung like a dead-weight on Mrs. Lynthorne's hands the whole morning. She had let Cornelia forego her music lesson. She had sent away the baby. Yes, Greville had heard Marweh snapping its little head off, as he crossed the hall, because it wanted to follow him.

Cornelia looked up from her drawing-board, and mutely entreated him to comply with Raynham's proposal.

"I'll go," said Greville carelessly.

"I want you for a purse-bearer," continued Raynham, as they walked away together. "Just step into my room and see how much cash you can carry. I have a little account to settle with a friend I am almost certain to meet."

"Oh, oh!" repeated Greville, as he loaded himself with successive strings of cash, Pao fashion.

The boat was quickly found. The day was glorious. The shoals of ducks were more numerous than ever. The very splash of the oars in the water had a refreshing sound. Raynham lay back with half-shut eyes, whilst Greville looked about him for the ragged boy in blue.

Raynham had acquired sufficient command of pidgin by this time to give his own orders to their boatman. To his surprise, Greville soon perceived the course they were taking would lead them to the city; for the river of Golden Sand runs right through Hankow, dividing the city into three. He was not pleased at the discovery.

Raynham met his remonstrance with a laugh. In the middle of that broad stream how could Greville help himself?

"It is a 'do!'" muttered the boy between his set teeth, as they entered a forest of junk-masts. He watched the five-clawed, sprawling dragons on the ridiculous flags which adorned them. He listened to the bang and clash of tom-toms and cymbals, as their

boat threaded its way among the miles of hulks which represent the trade of midland China with England. He pointed to the wretched mat-houses by the waterside, protesting, "You had no right to bring me here without my knowledge and against my will."

"Fire away," retorted Raynham. "Who cares? What limited knowledge you happen to possess may get enlarged against your will. Anyhow, you may add to it this one small fact—you do not lead me."

"Nor you me either," answered Greville, flinging off the strings of cash to the bottom of the boat as he was speaking.

"It is of no use getting into a bait," sneered Raynham, as the boat steered onward further and further into the heart of the city.

When Greville had entered Hankow with his father, it had been in the early morning. He saw it now in the full roar of its mid-day traffic. The low, curved, overhanging roofs, the poles and pillars, the flags and streamers which met his eye at every turn, might have made him fancy he was passing through some huge encampment. His eyes were dazzled with the vivid colouring, the gilding and the varnish, which faced him on every side. He was deafened by the confusion of sounds as their boat drew nearer to the river-bank,—the bawling of discordant voices, over the bargaining and bartering ever going forward, and for ever interrupted by the ceaseless processions defiling through the narrow ways. The squalling, noisy

music of a wedding-train, followed by a bevy of coolies bearing the bridal presents, was crossed by the unearthly howlings of a death-wail, raised by a band of hired mourners, accompanied by coolies blowing trumpets, banging cymbals, and letting off crackers to frighten away the evil spirits, with which, in the imagination of a Chinaman, the air abounds. A junk was waiting by the water's edge to carry the coffin across the river to its grave on some far-off hillside, which had been chosen as a fitting resting-place by the soothsayers. As the heavy coffin, like the trunk of some gigantic tree, hermetically sealed with clay, drew near, a fire was lighted on the bank, and some refreshments were burned to invigorate the spirit of the departed mandarin. The relations of the dead —men, women, and children—were dressed entirely in white, and stood round the fire chattering with each other whilst the rest of the procession, which was nearly a mile in length, came up. A row of gaudily-gilt cars, conveying eatables and gilded paper-money for the dead in the next world, followed in the rear.

It was impossible for Raynham's boat to proceed until the motley train were all embarked. But their progress did not seem to interrupt the performances of the jugglers and conjurers, the quack-doctors and the musicians. In the midst of all this din and noise, Greville could detect the thud of the blacksmith's hammer, the strange twang of the barber's tweezers,

the jarring notes of a cracked Jew's harp, and the clink of the tinker diligently working in his little portable shop.

But despite the narrow ways, the overwhelming masses of men, all in motion, all intent, at the approach of the city magistrates, with their numerous retinue, the crowds divided as if by magic. On they came, the various officers, with their attendant lictors, and followers bearing flags, umbrellas, painted lanterns, and other strange insignia of office intelligible to Chinese eyes: for they distinguish the rank of each individual by the badges on the back and breast of his robe, and by the button on the top of his cap.

Whilst the boat delayed, Greville caught sight of his old acquaintance, the duck-boy, looking taller and thinner in his summer rags. He had brought his feathered flock thus far for the sake of watching the mandarin's funeral. Greville waved his hat to signal to him to come nearer.

"What is that for?" asked Raynham.

"It means," said Greville, "that I'll go no further. I will not enter the city."

"Who asked you to enter the city? The Frenchman's little boulevard where we are going is no more the city than our English avenue, you duffer."

"I am such a duffer it makes no difference which. I am not going into either," was the resolute answer, as Greville leaped from the boat to the shelving mud

by the river-brink. The winter's practice at the leaping-bar served him now.

Raynham was white with exasperation as he saw him wading through the mud towards the duck-boy's raft; for how was he to carry those heavy strings of cash when he left the boat, without Greville's help?

It was easy work on the raft, gently gliding down the river, with the green trees of the English Concession for a landmark. A pointing finger, with a few nods and smiles, had made the duck-boy understand what it was Greville wanted him to do.

They sat on the floating log looking at each other. Then the boy began gabbling in Chinese with great rapidity. Greville could only shake his head, and repeat, "No can do."

They were drifting past the rush-built mat-hovels. The boy drew himself up, and pointed with his long bamboo to one of the dirtiest. Was it his present home? was it his mother's home? What did he mean? Greville could not tell. The ducks were getting into mischief, and it required all their driver's care and attention to get them into order again; and as for Greville, floating down the mighty stream in such a precarious fashion, to keep his head steady and his balance true was as much as he could manage.

He sprang upon the boating-stairs of the Concession with a feeling of thankfulness he rarely experienced. All the loose cash he had in his pocket

seemed too little to repay this queer little fish of a boy who had brought him safely home. He waved a good-bye, and ran off as quickly as he could towards the hong.

The fragrant smell of the afternoon tea warned Greville of the presence of a visitor in the drawing-room.

"Only Mr. Wymering," whispered Cornelia, as he peered in dubiously at the open window.

"Where is Raynham?" asked his mother.

"Gone into the city; so I came back," answered Greville briefly.

"As I was saying," resumed Mr. Wymering, "and I am an old resident—a twenty-years-in-this-country man, as we call it—and so have a right to an opinion, there is not much amiss with that young fellow. The climate will not hurt him at sixteen as it would at five-and-twenty."

"It is half sham; I know that well enough," muttered Greville, as he sat down by Cornelia, who was arranging their checker-board for a game.

Chinese chess differs very little from English chess, and their dominoes are exactly like our own; but the game in which the merchant's children took most delight was *wei-ki*. It is played on a board containing three hundred and twenty-four squares, with three hundred funny little ivory counters called pips; half are black, half white. The pieces are placed on the cross of the lines of the square; not on the square, as

we place our draughts. The object of the game is to take possession by surrounding as many crosses as the player can.

It is a more interesting game than draughts. Greville and Cornelia soon became absorbed in the contest for possession, as space after space was occupied, surrounded, cleared, and claimed, until the board was so covered with pips there was no move left without putting down on the adversary's ground, where they were sure to be taken directly; or on the player's own, where, if safe, the pips are valueless. They were just counting crosses to see which had got the game, when they became aware that Mr. Wymering and their mother had ceased talking.

"Hark!" said Mrs. Lynthorne anxiously.

The old merchant turned an experienced ear towards the city. There was a yell in the distance—an awful yell from a thousand voices, growing clearer and louder every moment.

"Something of a disturbance in the street, I fancy," observed Mr. Wymering, in a tone intended to reassure his nervous companion; but he stepped out bareheaded into the hong garden to listen.

"I had better run and tell father," cried Greville, darting off to the charsee's office. Cornelia left the checker-board and stood by her mother as another deafening yell drowned every other sound.

"I must see what this means," said Mr. Wymering, snatching up his hat, and swinging off at such a

rapid pace down the avenue there was no time for a reply.

There was a regular hubbub in the court among the coolies, all talking at once, screaming and gesticulating in the highest excitement.

Cornelia ran to the door to ask them what was the matter; although she received a dozen replies in a breath, not one was intelligible. She went back to her mother. Pao was bolting one garden-gate; her father and Greville entered at the other.

"Up to your masthead, my boy, and tell us what you can see," cried Mr. Lynthorne, in such unusually cheerful tones even Cornelia knew they were only an alarm-signal in the reverse.

Whilst Greville scrambled up his pole Mr. Lynthorne came towards them; and in answer to Mrs. Lynthorne's appealing glance (for her voice failed to make itself heard in the howling din) he shouted,—

"Some outbreak among the city roughs, I expect; nothing serious but the numbers."

Greville called from his outlook, "I can see. Not a doubt, it is a riot—men running, crowds upon crowds pouring out of every lane and alley! A perfect sea of heads, and hands hurling mud and stones!"

"Which way are they coming?" asked Mr. Lynthorne almost breathlessly.

"Straight here, of course," was the not unexpected reply. Similar observations from the roofs or trees belonging to the fourteen English hongs had led to

similar conclusions, and the ominous words, "Make ready," "Prepare," were passed from garden to garden with wonderful rapidity.

In point of fact, the little band of merchants were always ready for any emergency, knowing their very existence depended upon their foresight and caution. Their plan of action was all prearranged. Each one knew his post and the part assigned him. A goodly store of rifles were ready for use in the central hong, occupied by Mr. Wymering, who, as senior resident, was chairman of the council of five who directed the affairs of the Concession and took the lead in most things. Mr. Lynthorne was second. A guard was placed at every entrance.

"We can keep them off our ground for twenty-four hours any day, let the worst come that can come," they said to each other, "and in that time help will be steaming to us." Their eyes turned to the tea-ships in the river coming up from Shang-hai. Rifles were loaded. The twenty Chinese constables, with their English superintendent at their head, were posted *en masse* opposite the city gate, armed with nothing but their long bamboos. Behind them stood Mr. Wymering, rifle in hand, talking to their superintendent.

"Quell them? yes, without firing a shot. Deal your whacks right and left on the heads of the noisiest as they rush from the gate. There is powder and shot at the back of you in plenty, but it won't be needed. They will run every one of them at the stroke of

your bamboos. It is far the best way of meeting these disturbances."

A volley of musketry echoed over the low, curved roofs of the city. The rifles were grasped a little firmer by the resolute hands holding them in reserve, and knitted brows were lifted in the direction of the report.

"So that is the way our French neighbours are clearing their boulevard, is it? Too bad, too bad!" said Mr. Lynthorne.

"Fire on a half-naked crowd!" observed a brother merchant, adding quickly: "After this, matters may grow serious for us all."

"Unless we let them swarm in upon us there is nothing to fear," asserted Mr. Wymering. "They are only formidable through their numbers."

> "In yon straight path a thousand
> May well be stopped by three,"

laughed Mr. Lynthorne, who seemed to have dropped his habitual weight of care as he felt his spirits rise in the face of danger. One keen glance all round and his eye caught sight of Greville, like a monkey on his pole, still watching the infuriated mob. The position was too exposed. The boy would be a target for their stones. He looked about him for a messenger to call him down. Pao, whose curiosity was overcoming his fears, peeped out from the shelter of the hong gateway, and caught his master's eye. At that

moment Davydow appeared in sight, forcing his way through the advancing crowd by kicks and blows. His coat was torn and spattered with dirt from the showers of missiles falling around him.

The little party stationed at the entrance of the Concession opened a lane in their midst. He darted down, and the ranks closed up behind him. As he ran by Mr. Lynthorne, he saw the father's hand pointing out to Pao Greville's danger. With a nod of comprehension, he shouted "Downs!" in a voice that might have been heard on the other side of the river. The English was lame, but it served the purpose; Greville began his descent. Suddenly it flashed through Mr. Lynthorne's mind that it was odd he had seen nothing of Raynham. Not that he wanted the boy there; far from it. In truth, it was almost a relief that he was on the sick-list that night.

As Greville slid to the ground, Mr. Presgrave ran up the steps of the portico.

"Come!" he cried; "where are mother and sister? Off with you all to the tea-ship!"

"Is that necessary?" asked Mrs. Lynthorne, who was leaning against one of the pillars of the veranda, listening to the dismaying sounds.

"Necessary!" he repeated; "ask your own ears. It is prudence, Mrs. Lynthorne. Come along; we must obey the council. I am charged to see you all safe under Captain Axon's care. You know our rule—infants and invalids first. Mrs. Golding and her baby

are already in the boat with my wife. Frohawk is gone for Mrs. Wymering. There is not a minute to be lost. Any little delay on your part is keeping me from the front, where every arm may be needed to keep these fellows off our ground."

"Yes, yes, I know it.—Marweh! Greville! a shawl"

Mr. Presgrave snatched up the silk tablecloth and wrapped it round her. Greville put her white umbrella in her hand.

Cornelia caught up Koh-pi. "A hat!" she said faintly. "I must have a hat."

Greville gave her his. Marweh rushed in, wringing her hands and howling.

"Give the baby to the ama," said Mr. Presgrave.

"Yes, yes," reiterated Mrs. Lynthorne, taking up her basket of keys, as she looked hurriedly round. Koh-pi set up a refractory scream as Marweh held out her arms.

"She will only be good with me," ventured Cornelia.

"It will come to its own foo!" cried Greville, mounting her on his shoulder.

"All ready?" asked Mr. Presgrave, giving one arm to Mrs. Lynthorne; and putting the other round Cornelia's waist, he almost carried her across the avenue.

The boat was nearly full. They were the last to arrive. The ladies who were already seated crowded together to make room for Mrs. Lynthorne and Cornelia. Greville gave the baby to Marweh, and swung himself into the nearest tree. Clinging to the

topmost bough, and concealed from sight by its abundant foliage, his view of the city was excellent.

"The braves are out!" he exclaimed. "I can see them gathering in the market-place."

The braves are the irregular troops who carry European arms, and are a little more efficient than the guard-house soldiers, with their paper helmets.

There was a murmur of thankfulness from the ladies in the boat.

"All here?" asked Captain Axon; "all in?"

"All!" answered Mr. Presgrave.

"Where is Greville?" interrupted Mrs. Lynthorne.

"Where I can be of use," he replied from the boughs above.

"All right!" answered Mr. Presgrave.—"Push off."

"Give me Koh-pi," entreated Cornelia. "She will sit on my lap. She will take no room."

The first stroke of Captain Axon's oar was heard in the water.

Mr. Presgrave called after them, "The ama and child shall come in the next boat."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RIOT.

WHEN the boat was gone, Greville returned with Marweh to the deserted house.

Pao had brought Whang, and chained him in the doorway to keep out intruders, in the absence of the missisee. They went in together. Marweh took the child into the nursery, and Greville ran out into the court to inquire of the coolies who were still lingering about if any one had seen Raynham. He was growing sorely troubled; but Raynham might have come back with Davydow, might be with his father. Greville could not rest until he knew where he was. Pao had stolen round to convey to his master the good news that the ladies were safe in the tea-ship. He was gliding back towards the hong, where he considered himself on guard, when Greville met him with the eager question, "Is Mr. Raynham with father?"

"No," replied Pao.

"Didn't he come back with Monsieur Davydow?" asked Greville.

"You leavee him in city, you comee back!" ex-

claimed Pao. "Knockee your head on ground for dat. He stay in city. He crushee. He squeezee. He walkee over. He chokee down in mud."

The dangers Pao so graphically described as likely to overwhelm the luckless Raynham decided Greville to tell his father at once where he had left him.

All within the Concession was as still as a Sabbath morning; without, the wild howling and yelling seemed to increase. Stones were flying everywhere. Greville crept along close to the wall of the hong gardens; but he could not proceed unnoticed by the vigilant watch. He was sternly ordered back by Mr. Golding.

Then he betook himself once more to his tree, anxiously scanning the boats on the river. Raynham might be returning by water.

Greville was wretched. He was frightened. A blare of trumpets, and the gleam of lanterns borne on poles high above the curving roofs, assured him the city authorities were advancing in the rear of the rioters. It might be as dangerous for Raynham to be seized in the street, by such cruel-looking men as he had seen that morning, as to be trampled down by the crowd. A scream of the cormorants from the yellow river made itself heard through the din. He ran along one of the strongest branches, which lapped the water, and hailed old Ting. The good-natured Chinaman was willing enough to leave his midnight fishing to row through the city in search of the

missing Raynham, whom he very clearly remembered.

"Find him and bring him back if you can, and I will pay you twice as much as you could gain by a night's fishing," repeated Greville. Whilst he was speaking another boat drew near the bank, and Captain Axon sprang on shore.

Greville dropped to the ground to meet him. Here was some one who would share his fears for Raynham's safety. There were one or two coolie rowers in the boat, and the burly boatswain, who recognized Greville, and greeted him with a hearty slap on the back.

The captain entered into the position of affairs in a moment. If Raynham had reached his friends before the riot began, he would probably remain there all night, until the city was quiet; but if he were overtaken by the mob in the streets, no one could say what the consequences might be. The captain turned from Greville to the boatswain. They spoke a few words together, which he did not hear, and then with a nod of assent the boatswain jumped into the sampan and started with Ting for the French quarters.

"Savignac!" he shouted; "did you say Savignac?"

"Savignac!" repeated the captain, in a voice that rose above the splash of the oars in the water and the yell of the crowds on the land.

Greville kept close by the captain's side as he went

up the avenue with rapid strides towards the scene of action.

It was growing serious with the little band of merchants, for fresh waves of men came pouring out of the city gate, to be met with a flourish of bamboos, striking right and left with undiminished vigour. Parties of the hong clerks, with their white robes tucked up in their girdles, had reinforced the constables, and were mounting guard under the direction of their English masters at every weak point where it seemed likely the mob might enter.

"Now," cried Greville, as he reached the last tree, "I am up for another observation."

The captain gave him a lift, and he was leaping from bough to bough like a squirrel before any one else knew that he was there.

"The city guards are upon them! the men are running!" he cried. The captain shouted the glad news in tones that made themselves heard even amidst the roar of that human tempest.

The precipitate rush from the gate was the rush of retreat. Men were flying wildly down every lane and alley within the city until every outlet was choking. The crowd in the main thoroughfare, which had been madly vowing to drive every foreigner into the river, now flung themselves into the Concession as a place of refuge. For those who could not escape there was yet the hope of being taken on English ground.

The constables were making prisoners, tying the poor wretches together by their pig-tails in threes, according to Chinese custom.

"Now, my little skylark, come down," said the captain. "You can keep watch for the boat's return from the steps of your father's portico whilst I go to his help; for though the tide has turned, the work is not done yet."

The shadows were lengthening in the avenue as Greville retraced his steps. Whang barked ferociously as he drew near his home; which gradually subsided as he discovered who was coming.

Greville went indoors and comforted Marweh with the assurance that the mob was dispersing. Koh-pi was crying bitterly, declaring she would not go by-by without her little moo.

Her baby English was usually adorned with a redundancy of k's and q's, and had a strong resemblance to the talking of a jackdaw, there was such a quack in her voice, especially when she was angry; and she was very angry at being left behind. She was sleepy and frightened, having been wakened up again and again by the fearful noise. She lay now on a mat on the nursery floor, kicking her shoes off, and then entreating to have them put on again, that she might "go boatee."

Greville knew that Marweh's temper would not stand that game much longer. He heard her snapping and snubbing, and more than suspected, by the sharp

cry which followed, that they were accompanied by a pinch. Even on such a night he could not leave his Koh-pi. A little arm, with one or two ominous red patches about it, was held up piteously to be kissed; and the funny little slit of a mouth whispered, "Koh-pi no kay chin-chin; Koh-pi kay prayer with her moo."

With the sounds of strife jarring every nerve, and the anxious longing to return to his watch, he could have found it in his heart to tell her she must be quiet and lie still. But no; he must not tell her, baby as she was, she need not pray when danger seemed all round them. He made her kneel down and fold her little hands together; but the words Cornelia had taught her were all scattered. Greville wanted something better than his own words to teach her on such a night — something that was a real prayer, and one that had been answered. He thought a moment, and then repeated softly and slowly, "Lord, remember me."

"It is the best I can teach her," he thought. "It is so short she will not forget it, and it means so much."

"Dat good saying for a night of fear," observed Pao, who had followed him. "Pao knock his head on the ground and say um too. Big stone tumble him over. Next send him too plenty hurry to his ancestors. Do his chin-chin then: that chancee number one. Now say, 'Lord, remember me:' that chancee

number two. Master Greville, bad night this. Pao do chin-chin for you too."

"No need for that, Pao," answered Greville. "If the Lord of heaven remembers us, we want nothing else. We will ask him to remember us all."

The howling round the city gate was drowning their voices. He laid Koh-pi on her mat, and charging Marweh to take care of her, ran out.

The stone-throwing was over; the darkness was increasing fast. Greville resumed his watch by the river-bank. A hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Captain Axon!" he exclaimed, and stopped, for he saw they were not alone; but the broad shadow that was thrown upon the water could belong to no other than the Russian Davydow.

"See anything of the boat?" asked the captain anxiously.

Greville shook his head. His companions spoke in French to each other. He could not catch all they said, but he gathered, from looks and tones and the few words he could understand, that their alarm about Raynham had increased.

The captain's French was now and then at fault, and one English sentence slipped out unawares which Greville could not mistake.

"I mean to get him out of the way before anything of this is known."

"Put stops to boat on the water," answered Davydow.

An impression was forming in Greville's mind that somehow or other Raynham was mixed up in an affair which had caused the riot.

The white board of a fishing-sampan flashed across the darkling water at their feet. The captain hailed it.

"I shall take you with me, my lad," he said to Greville; "I shall make it all right with your father. Raynham has told me himself many times you never split."

"So he has owned it at last, has he?" thought Greville, as he took his place in the boat, pushing off to the rescue in the dark.

They had not far to row when the scream of the cormorants met his ear.

"They are coming," he whispered: "I know the voices of those birds as they pounce on their prey."

The knell-like sound of the time-gong told the passing hour from many a junk, and the flashing lanterns of the fishing-boats gleamed like stars upon the water.

"There they are!" cried Greville excitedly.

The captain's shout was answered by the boatswain's deep-mouthed hurrah.

"Found," muttered Axon under his breath. A load like lead seemed to have been lifted from Greville's heart.

In another moment the boats were alongside. The first thing which Greville saw was Old-ah-you stand-

ing up beside the flower-pots, wearing the gourd-skin at last—a shred of comfort in the midst of that dreadful night. The next object which met his eye was a dark figure huddled upon the deck. Could that be Raynham? Where was Ting? Before he could find answers to these questions, he heard the boatswain speaking.

"Found him, yes; and brought him off through thick and thin—out of the very claws of their mountebank police."

"No need of explanations," returned the captain. "Pay your fare and come into our boat."

Old-ah-you and her mother were indulging in a dismal howl. Greville looked round uneasily while the captain and the boatswain helped Raynham out of one boat into the other. Greville caught sight of a strangely pale face, two fierce, sullen eyes, and a dogged, close-shut mouth. Was that the Raynham he had parted with in the morning?

"Are you hurt?" he asked breathlessly.

"I'm killed outright, as you would see if you had eyes." The muttered reply was a little discredited by the lips which uttered it.

Greville could hardly believe the killing was quite accomplished when Raynham himself informed him of the fact, but the poor fellow's plight was pitiable enough. One arm hung down helplessly, and he spoke of a bullet in his knee.

"How came you to involve yourself in a city

brawl?" asked the captain, as he bent down to examine Raynham's real condition when their boat pushed off, leaving old Ting's wife to string her cash and howl for her missing bread-winner. The fisherman had not returned.

Again the question rose to Greville's lips, "What has become of Ting?"

"I was forced," answered the boatswain, "to leave him to take his chance. He had guided me to the French quarter looking for this youngster, where, as usual, this riot began. The city police had driven the mob before them, and a few of their number were lingering behind to take up the stragglers. I saw an Englishman's hat on the pathway, and a yellow hand on the Englishman's shoulder. A blow of my fist sent the Chinaman rolling; and I walked off our young friend here to the boat as fast as legs could carry me."

The darkness was deepening around them. The howl of the children in the sampan which was slowly following their track grew fainter as the distance between them widened. Raynham's smothered moan of pain became more frequent. The captain leaned forward in low and earnest conversation with the boatswain. What were they planning?

Raynham raised his feverish eyes to the calm sky above. "I can't hear what you are talking about," he said impatiently.

"How best to get you out of the way until all this

has blown over," answered the captain. "I have bargained with these coolies to row you down the river at their fastest, and put you and the boatswain on board the *Kung-wo*—a tea-ship steamer that will weigh anchor with the dawn—and take you to Shang-hai. It carries a large cargo, with a hundred coolies or more; but you will find a little niche of a cabin for the three or four Englishmen on board clean and comfortable. When you reach Shang-hai, if I mistake not, that knee will make you quiet enough until you hear from me. Keep up heart. I'll make the best case of it I can to Lynthorne."

They were dropping down beneath the shadows of the overhanging trees of the English Concession.

"Give me your hand, Grev," whispered Raynham, when he knew that they must part. "You are a jolly good fellow. If you had not sent the boat after me—" His voice failed, but the mutual squeeze told the rest.

The plague of the insects hived among the arching boughs under which they were gliding added to his torment. Greville flicked them from him with assiduous care. The boating-stairs were in sight.

Raynham exerted himself to speak once more. This time he turned to the captain. "You ought to know how all this occurred. I owed a fellow a bet, and stopped to pay him at the joss-house. He tried to cheat me out of as much more, and I would not

stand his nonsense. He followed me bawling up to Savignac's gate. A crowd was gathering round us. They drove me mad."

"No more talking," interposed the captain. "I have seen Davydow."

"But—" interposed Greville eagerly.

"Ask no questions," said the captain; "it is enough. We all heard the Frenchmen firing on the mob; you were overtaken by the crowd on the way to your friend's; a bullet struck you in the knee. Ah, it would be very well for us all if mischief ended where it began; but it is like a stone thrown into the water—the eddy widens until no one knows where it will touch."

Greville felt the kindness of the captain's "closure," as far as he was himself concerned. He could so well imagine how Raynham, left to himself, was likely to behave in such circumstances, he scarcely needed to ask that question.

The boat stopped.

"Good-bye, old fellow, good-bye." There was time for nothing more. Captain Axon gave a hand to Greville, who groped his way after him up the well-known stairs.

The boat rowed on at accelerated speed, lightened of half its passengers.

Greville and the captain walked slowly down the avenue. Coolies were running hither and thither. Lanterns were flashing between the garden trees. The

jarring sounds of strife were over, but the babel of voices was beyond everything imaginable.

When they reached the gate of Mr. Lynthorne's hong, the captain paused, and bade his young companion "go in home and go to bed. It is better," he added, "that I should be the first to see Mr. Lynthorne."

CHAPTER XVIII.

KOH-PI IS LOST.

THE first faint streak of dawn shed an uncertain light upon the polished floor of his father's hall as Greville entered. Whang was still chained in the doorway, and pushed his black nose into Greville's hand as he passed him, following him to the length of his chain as he peeped into the nursery before he went to his own room. Marweh was asleep on the mat, but he could not see Koh-pi. He did not arouse the ama then, for Greville only thought his little Moses had awakened of her own accord and toddled off to look for him or Cornelia. So he looked in the drawing-room, calling her softly, first by one pet name and then another. No answer anywhere; but in the din of tongues outside she might not hear him. There were the empty teacups as his mother had left them; there were the black and white pips strewing the floor, but the darling who had scattered them was nowhere to be seen. Not a creature had entered the room since they had left it. Greville was very glad to discover a little cold tea left in one of the cups, for

he was very hungry. He must have something to eat before he went to sleep. He could gather plenty of fruit for himself in the garden; but where could Koh-pi be?

He ran from room to room. The hong was deserted. Chinese officials, merchants, and coolies were all at work making arrangements for the prisoners. The strong shed of bamboo lattice, which served as a Newgate for the Concession, could not hold one-half of the poor wretches who claimed to have been taken within its boundaries.

Fairly frightened at last, Greville called up Marweh.

She stared at him stupidly, and declared she did not know. She put the baby to sleep. She had been to sleep herself. How should she know? It was running about somewhere. If a girl was permitted to run like a boy, what could they expect?

"Don't talk like that to me," retorted Greville, as he unchained Whang and brought him to the mat where Koh-pi had been put to sleep. The dog sniffed round it, and turned to the door.

"Where is Koh-pi?" demanded Greville. "Find Koh-pi."

The dog pounced upon Marweh and gave her a shake, and then tried to drag her with him to the door.

"Marweh, what have you done with the baby?" cried Greville, feeling far more trust in the dog's sagacity than in Marweh's truth; but he could get

nothing more out of either. He started with Whang to search the courts at the back. But on this side of the house every door had been shut and the latches drawn before he went away. The only door left open was the one to the portico, which Whang guarded. Greville was certain Whang would never let Koh-pi pass him and go out alone in the dark. He began to fear Marweh, tired with her crossness, had shut her out, to get a little sleep herself.

The hong was built round a large square, which was divided into the court where the cooking-fires were lighted, and the business court, into which the warehouses and offices opened. The gates were all closed, and the latches drawn inside. Of course some one might have come in during the night, most likely they had, to see if all was right, and gone off again. Possibly Koh-pi got away whilst the doors stood open. Greville shuddered at the thought. Once outside the hong garden, she might have run to the boating-stairs, where she had parted with Cornelia. He thought of Old-ah-you. Koh-pi might have fallen in the river. Away he rushed. He scarcely noticed Whang, who was scenting diligently along the path between the portico and the gate. Greville's head was full of the horror that Koh-pi was drowned whilst he was looking for Raynham. His anger flamed hot against Mr. Presgrave.

It was very hard that nobody would think it of the least consequence what became of his little darling,

just because her cheek was yellow. Any right-minded person ought to know the difference between Cornelia and Koh-pi was only skin-deep. Mr. Presgrave might have put her in the boat with Cornelia. It would not have hurt anybody. Oh, it was cruel, cruel to leave her behind!

Greville raced up and down the river-bank. If they had only tied a gourd-skin round Koh-pi's waist, that might have saved her.

Greville seemed to see her once again, as he had seen her the night before, with nothing on but her little white pinafore, with the bunch of scarlet ribbon at the sleeve, shaking the wei-ki pips in her lap, and showing one fat knee. Should he never see her again? Her lisping voice was ringing in his ears. "Lord, remember me." The words were echoing in the depths of his own sad heart as he looked up into the clear blue sky of morning and heard the trilling notes of the early birds. "Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows, and not one of them is forgotten before God."

There was comfort in that. He met Pao returning to open the hong.

"Never mind," said the good-natured boy coaxingly; "Pao will soon get you another."

This was dreadful. Greville's hands went up to his ears. He turned to his dog. Whang had a heart; but Whang was nowhere to be seen.

"Whang can do," pursued Pao soothingly; "Pao

have good look see. Childee sleepee — hab um soon."

Cooking-fires were being lighted in all the hong courts; and the compradors, who do the marketing for their English masters, were starting off to the city for fresh supplies of rice, for all these prisoners must be fed. The merchants themselves and their principal clerks were hurrying into their respective homes for a hasty meal, at which supper and breakfast shook hands, as no one could decide which it really was.

Mr. Lynthorne did not return to his own house— he snatched a cup of superlative tea at his friend Golding's, being nearer; whilst Mr. Wymering entertained the mandarin and his train.

Greville felt all the better for the cup of Indy's milk, which Pao insisted upon giving him, since Cornelia and Koh-pi were both out of reach. He went with the coolies to take the rice to the prisoners, hoping to catch a word with his father. What would he say about Raynham? Had Captain Axon seen him yet?

Greville walked slowly round the latticed pens, in which the prisoners were confined, peeping between the bamboos at the crowd inside. There were plenty of black eyes and broken heads among the half-naked figures sitting on the ground with their knees up, laughing and talking, looking as happy and contented as possible at the prospect of an abundant chow-chow. The great caldrons of steaming rice were set down

outside the lattice. The poor fellows were grinning at the sight. Had they ever had such a "chancee" before of getting a good breakfast without paying for it? A rest in an English prison, where there was no torture, no work, and plenty of food, was a sort of holiday to those poor toilers.

Some boys and a few women, sons and wives of the prisoners, were giving them bits of sugar-cane stick through the openings in the lattice. Greville recognized Ting's wife in the midst of the group.

How could the old fisherman have got into that bamboo cage? A feeling of anxious responsibility came over Greville. He hurried round to look. Yes, there was Ting, grinning between the bars, evidently imploring Greville to come and speak to him.

When the boatswain knocked down the Chinese policeman and brought off Raynham, Ting was left behind. It was easy to guess what followed. The policeman got up and seized upon Ting as the aggressor.

"He vows he will have my life," sobbed the old man. "The mandarin is sure to order fifty or sixty of us to be put to death, and I shall be one of them."

This was said in Chinese, but a neighbour who was more fluent in pidgin interpreted for him. But the all-important request Ting had to make could not be trusted to an interpreter.

"Mastee Greville," he implored, "you hiree me. Then you my master, I your man; so I tellee I coolie

to the Queen of England's cousin. He no believee me. Give him good look see at little English doll up my sleeve. He likee that. He bring me here."

Then the poor fisherman's wife went down in the dust, knocking her head and grovelling at Greville's feet, imploring him to claim her husband and save his life.

Greville put up his hand to his head with a feeling of desperation. Was not he bound in honour to speak out and save poor Ting, who was innocent of all wrong-doing in the matter? But then he had promised to keep silent, to screen Raynham, and leave all explanations to Captain Axon. His cogitations ended in a burning desire to get at Mr. Lynthorne. "I must tell father, I must," he decided.

Where was he to find him? Greville popped in and out the different hongs, asking whoever he met, clerk or coolie, if they had seen his father.

One of them told him the merchants were holding a consultation in the public room at the central hong. From another he learned that as soon as the prisoners had finished their chow-chow they were to be had up before the mandarin. They were to be tried by Chinese law, of course, but English influence would moderate the proceedings.

Greville ran on and posted himself by Mr. Wymering's gate, hoping to stop his father as he came out. There were several gentlemen, English, French, and Chinese, talking together on the steps of the portico.

He recognized Davydow, and he believed another who had just arrived was the British consul. Captain Axon stepped out from the group, and came towards him with an inquiring "Well?"

"I want to see father," repeated Greville.

"That is out of the question," returned the captain, who was really anxious to prevent the meeting between father and son until he had had his explanation with Mr. Lynthorne.

If Mr. Frohawk had been on shore, Greville could have turned to him for assistance; but he had remained on board the tea-ship, to take care of the ladies. Greville was thrown back on his own resources. He must decide for himself how to act.

He ran home to see if Pao had found any trace of the lost Koh-pi.

The boy, with his clean white robe tucked up as usual in his girdle, was complacently arranging the breakfast-table.

"The missisee soon come back now," he said cheerily.

"But Koh-pi?" asked Greville breathlessly; "have you found anything of Koh-pi?"

"No can do," repeated Pao. "That bad Marweh give her away over hedge. Pao take good look see all round. Shut up prisoners. Charsee say let women go."

"Were there women in the crowd last night?" asked Greville.

Pao nodded and counted on his fingers. "Baby's own moochin; one no can say."

Marweh met Pao's assertions with angry contradiction.

"I hearee," observed Pao contemptuously. "We Chinamen all know what de women losee in de toe is added to de tongue."

Greville knew not what to believe. Pao might have no more real ground for his assertion than he had for his persuasion that his master was cousin to the Queen. He begged, he coaxed, he commanded Marweh to tell him the truth, in vain. A coolie ran in to warn Pao the trials were beginning. All the Chinamen in the Concession were bent on forcing their way into the court-room, eager as ever to see and hear all that was going forward.

When Greville explained to Pao why he must get in to speak for Ting, the boy was delighted. There was no trouble in getting a place among the witnesses for any one so well known as his master's son. They waited in the anteroom for a long time, under the supervision of some of the strangers belonging to the mandarin's retinue.

Pao sat on the floor, fanning himself complacently. Greville leaned against the window. One thought rose above every other: "If Ting is put to death because I sent him into the city, I shall never have another happy day as long as I live."

Then the words he had chosen for Koh-pi seemed

to whisper in his ear, and he walked into the court-room saying to himself, "I will be true to both."

Pao followed, holding his fan over his young master's head, to add a little dignity to his appearance.

The Chinese magistrate, in his robes of office, was seated in great state in an arm-chair in the middle of the room, and at a table before him sat his clerks with their writing-brushes, ready to endorse his sentences.

The magistrate wore his official hat, with its long red tassel, and a clear blue button, like a knob, in the centre, which Pao did not fail to point out to Greville. For this knot in his hat, and the peacock embroidered on the breast and back of his stiff silk robes, proclaimed him a mandarin of the third degree. His hands were folded in his sleeves, and his purse was hanging in his girdle, with a handsome snuff-bottle and tobacco-pouch. He looked pompously through his huge crystal spectacles as the English boy approached.

Greville scarcely raised his eyes from the mandarin's turned-up satin shoes for the first few moments. When he ventured to look up, he started to perceive his own father sitting a little behind this solemn dignitary on an ordinary bamboo chair, with one arm thrown carelessly over the back, in the attitude of an idle spectator. On the other side of the grand mandarin, Mr. Wymering was lounging, with

a cigar in his mouth. There was a quick movement in one of Mr. Lynthorne's eyelids when he saw his boy so ceremoniously ushered in by Pao; but great as his astonishment was, he checked every other indication of his surprise. Captain Axon evinced far more uneasiness, and Davydow changed colour. Mr. Lynthorne wondered more and more. But Greville saw nothing of this, or it might have confused him. He told his story as briefly and clearly as he could, simply stating:—

A friend of his had gone to pay a visit to one of the French hongs; that was earlier in the day, before the riot began. When the riot was at its height, he, Greville Lynthorne, finding his friend had not got home, and thinking it would be unsafe for him to return through the streets, went down to the river and hired a sampan to fetch him by water. The prisoner, whom he knew very well, was the man he hired, and he saw him start for the city in his boat, just before the time-gong sounded. Ting did not come back again, and he did not see him again until this morning, when he recognized him among the prisoners.

A coolie now came forward—a cunning old Chinaman, who said he was the father of Ting's wife, and coolie to Monsieur Savignac. After the mob had cleared out of the boulevard, he saw his son-in-law near their gate, and went to meet him. There was a scuffle going on with the police. He saw the policeman

knocked down by a man in the dress of a European sailor. Ting had nothing to do with it.

Greville could not tell what the coolie was saying, as the man spoke in Chinese; and as he was removed by the fussy Chinese officials, he could not be sure whether Ting would escape or no.

But Mr. Lynthorne, who had his own comprador at his elbow, to interpret every word of the proceedings to him, smiled as Greville tried to catch his eye.

Pao, whose Chinese curiosity could not forego the pleasure of listening to the conclusion of the trial, found standing-room for himself and his young master near the door.

The room, of course, was full to overflowing, and groups of eager faces surrounded every window—all, as usual, talking and gesticulating; delivering their own opinions, and making all sorts of comments upon the prisoners.

The mandarin, who considered the English merchants had been the chief sufferers from the outbreak, was very anxious to give them every satisfaction in his power. Before he pronounced sentence, he slightly glanced over his right shoulder towards Mr. Wymering, who remarked, in a quiet but decided undertone, "Not proven."

Then the portly judge turned an ear to his left-hand neighbour.

"Not proven," observed Mr. Lynthorne in a low aside.

The mandarin, prompted by a love of imitation

as strong as that which actuated poor little lost Koh-pi, cleared his throat, settled his flowing robes, and repeated in his high-pitched, cracked voice, "Not proven."

The effect was so absurd, Captain Axon and the French gentlemen who stood by Davydow were choking with laughter.

Mr. Lynthorne and Mr. Wymering were too intent upon maintaining their quiet control over the whole of the business of the day to see its comic side.

Ting and his father-in-law could scarcely credit their senses and believe that he had escaped with his head. A crowd of chattering friends closed round him, and he went out of the room, laughing at his own good luck—the only thing in which a Chinaman really believes.

Captain Axon's hand was on Greville's shoulder.

"You have done well, my boy. You've cleared the boatman. Now go home, for fear you should damage your old chum by an indiscreet word."

Greville nodded an assent, and slipped away in the crowd. Pao recalled him.

"Always too plenty hurry, Master Greville," he said reprovingly. "What! no can see your foochin?" and Pao held up one finger, imitating to the life the action by which Mr. Lynthorne had signed to his son to come round to him.

"I must go," thought Greville, "whether Captain Axon has seen father or not."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SEARCH.

"WHAT is all this about, Grev?" asked Mr. Lynthorne, with the keen "no nonsense" look in his eyes which Greville so well understood.

"About Raynham, of course," answered Greville, without a moment's hesitation. "Captain Axon is waiting to tell you. He was hurt in the city. But, father, Marweh has lost Koh-pi! Pao thinks she has given her back to her own mother."

The brief delay was over. Another prisoner was brought in. Greville waited behind his father's chair, not at all sure that his last words had even been heard.

But when the next pause occurred, Mr. Lynthorne bent over Greville and whispered, "If Pao is right, we can do nothing. I have no legal claim over the child. You go and tell Cornelia not to fret. When I get home we'll see what can be done. Might perhaps hire it for so much a day for Cornelia to play with."

Greville felt his father did not half understand him. He did not comprehend that Koh-pi was gone,

clean gone, and nobody knew where. But Greville felt he must not stay any longer. Mother and Cornelia might have got home again: that was the only spark of comfort left.

The heat seemed to rise beneath his feet as he went out of Mr. Wymering's gate and walked slowly down the avenue. His hair was wet through and through with this slight exertion; he only longed to get rid of it. There was some sense in shaving heads in such a climate, after all. He lifted his hat from his burning forehead, and saw Mr. Presgrave's boy bringing home Cornelia.

"Is that you, Grevie?" she exclaimed. "Come under my umbrella."

"It is just the fag end of me," he answered. "Where is mother?"

Cornelia held her umbrella high to cover them both as she went on talking. "Greville dear, what a dreadful night! the noises were awful. I thought you were all being killed. Little Maudie Golding was frightened into convulsions. Mother can't leave her, for Mrs. Golding is crying. Mrs. Wymering and mother are doing all they can to save her. Mrs. Presgrave knows nothing about babies, so she has come back in the boat to see if it is safe to bring it home. Mrs. Wymering said she had better bring me with her. O dear, I am so glad to be back with you and father and Koh-pi!"

Greville's chest gave a great heave as he ex-

claimed in a husky voice, suggestive of a sob, "Koh-pi is lost."

"Lost!" echoed Cornelia. "Not Koh-pi? You cannot, you do not mean it?"

She trembled so violently Greville put his arm round her waist.

"Don't hold me!" she cried. "Let me go and look for her. Where was she, Grevie?"

"I am afraid she is stolen," added Greville mournfully. "Marweh must know something, but she will not say. She keeps declaring all sorts of contradictory things, which I know are not true."

They had reached their own gate by this time, and Cornelia flung herself on the garden grass in an abandonment of grief.

"Cornelia darling, don't cry like that!" entreated poor Greville. "We must try and find her. If her own mother has got her away from us, the duck-boy will know where she is."

This was a real hope. Cornelia was ready to fly anywhere. She was not in half so bad a plight as her brother, for she had had some sleep and a comfortable breakfast on shipboard.

"We cannot wait until he brings the ducks home at night. Oh, if we had only a boat of our own, that we could row after him and find him!" she said.

"Ting would take me," cried Greville, forgetting the heat, as he ran back across the avenue to the boating-stairs to watch for the well-known sampan.

There it was, drifting under the trees, with the cormorants sitting sleepily on their perches, and Old-ah-you hanging over the side of the boat, rippling the yellow water with a little stick to amuse her brother.

"She will go over head foremost in another minute," thought Greville.

Old-ah-you must have seen the duck-boy taking his flock for their daily walk, and she was quite big enough to tell them which way he went that morning, if they could only get hold of one of their own coolies to ask her in Chinese. But in the midst of the hurry and excitement of that morning, no one had a moment to spare for them. Greville went back to Mr. Wymering's hong to look in the crowd around it for Ting.

He found the Ting family surrounded by a knot of jubilant friends, congratulating him on his good luck. Gratitude is by no means a Chinese virtue. With a scowl, Mrs. Ting watched Greville approaching, being of the rioters' opinion that it was the presence of these hideous fung-yang brought all the bad luck. Ting himself knew well but for the doll in his sleeve he should never have been counted among the Englishmen's coolies. He welcomed Greville with a smile, which made his broad mouth reach from ear to ear.

Ting heard of Koh-pi's loss with amazement: it seemed so absurd to think any one would steal a little dust-pan and hand-brush. Marweh must have wanted to get rid of her.

Then Ting reflected. There was an old woman who went to Hankow market every now and then with a basket of babies to sell. She might have snapped up Koh-pi. She often waited for Ting to ferry her across the river. Ting proposed to row Greville to the ferry, come upon her unawares and have a look at her babies, and find the duck-boy too. It was of no use waiting until Mr. or Mrs. Lynthorne returned to their hong, for the market might be over and Koh-pi sold.

Greville hastened to share this ray of hope with his sister. It was faint, but they clung to it as the drowning cling to a straw.

"We must go," they said; "and we will go together. If we do not, nobody else can, and we shall lose our Koh-pi for ever."

Ting lifted Cornelia into the sampan, and found her a seat among the flowers. One of the cormorants turned round to examine her, putting his head first on one side and then on the other. His next neighbour thought this slow work; and darting his long neck forward, he snipped a nice little tricorner out of the hem of her dress. Whang came splashing through the water, with a bark and a growl, to defend his favourite. A battle between the bird and the dog was imminent; Greville and Ting had much ado to prevent it. They could not see much of Whang but his head. That he had been in the wars was clear, for one eye was so swollen over he could hardly see. He

swam round the boat, trying to get in. He was carrying something in his teeth. Greville held out his hand to take it. Cornelia sprang forward, exclaiming, "It is Koh-pi's sock!"

Whang had been swimming after the boat to give it to them. He looked in their faces with low, whining noises, interspersed with short, quick barks. There was something he wanted to make them understand. After a while he jumped out of the water and ran up the bank, barking desperately to Greville to follow him.

They had passed the boundaries of the Concession. They had nearly reached the low mat-hovels by the river-side, when he set off running, with his head to the ground, straight on to the very hut the duck-boy had pointed out with his bamboo.

"We must not go farther than this," said Greville. "I am afraid the woman is not here."

Cornelia was intently watching the dog. "He means something," she said.

"He does," answered Greville, in a tone of great provocation, as Whang rushed into the midst of a flock of ducks, scattering them in every direction. Some took to the water; some flew a yard or two in the air. Old-ah-you and her brother screamed with delight. Ting's wife was gabbling at her loudest to her husband and father. But through all this confusion of sounds, Cornelia caught the echo of a piercing shriek.

"It is Koh-pi!" she cried; "it is Koh-pi's voice. O listen, Grevie, listen!"

Just then the duck-boy came in sight, panting and running to get his frightened flock into order. Ting ran his sampan aground, and lifted Cornelia out. Greville had sprung on shore without waiting for help. They could hear the sharp, incessant shrieks more clearly than before.

"It is—it is our Koh-pi!" they exclaimed.

Whang darted back, seized Cornelia's dress in his teeth, and dragged her towards the hut. Greville and Ting were speaking to the duck-boy. He had got a companion. Ting told Greville this was his brother—a child of five years old, who was carrying a cabbage on the end of a light bamboo cane over his shoulder. Whilst they were talking to the boys, Cornelia and Whang ran up to the door of the hut, and listened. Whang laid his ear to the ground, and looked up in her face as if he said, "She is here."

Again that fearful shriek.

"Koh-pi, Koh-pi darling! where are you?" called Cornelia.

"Koh-pi so hurt," answered the baby voice from within.

Cornelia beckoned to Greville. She knew they must be careful. Her first impulse was to rush into the hut and get hold of Koh-pi, but she restrained herself until Greville came up; how, she hardly knew.

Ting had sent off the little boy to find his father. Their old friend in his blue rags was eagerly explaining to Ting that he had told his mother where the baby was when he spoke to her as she passed him in the passenger-boat the night Cornelia held up the baby to the window that he might see her, and that his little brother had just told him his mother brought it home again last night. Ting explained this to Greville as well as he could, adding, with a reassuring laugh, "Waitee. You no savoy. Ting do talkee."

Greville grasped Cornelia's hand. They felt that Ting was right; but how to stand there listening to Koh-pi's shrieks was more than they knew how to bear. It was dreadful to realize that she belonged to the owner of this wretched hovel, not to them. It would have been more hopeful if the old woman had stolen her to sell again; then they might have got their darling back; but here they could do nothing. To run off with her, why, that would be stealing on their part. They both knew it, and looked into each other's eyes in mute despair. It was as if the river rolled between them and their little Koh-pi—a river without a bridge.

Ting was waiting to see if the father could be found; but Whang was restlessly walking round the hut, and pawing at its shaky foundations, as if he had some idea of digging his way in. A mat was tied across the doorway, and somebody inside the hut was making it more secure.

"They mean to keep us out," whispered Greville.

"Hush! she is speaking," interrupted Cornelia.

Then there came a sharper cry than ever, and again the infantine murmur.

Yes, it was her baby prayer, "Lord, remember me."

The tears welled into Greville's dry eyes.

"He will, Cornelia," he said huskily. "We shall find some way. We shall save her."

Whang had completed his survey of the hovel. He gave a tug at Cornelia's dress in passing; and with a bright look, that said as plainly as words, "Now be ready," he sprang at the mat in the doorway, and tore it down. A woman struck at him with a broomstick. Greville shouted to him to come back, in terror for the consequences.

"Moochin! moochin!" cried the duck-boy, catching her arm and kissing her.

Cornelia slipped quickly past them both to the end of the hut, where Koh-pi lay moaning on a dirty mat. She was down on one knee beside her. Two little arms clasped round her neck, with a tenacity that seemed to defy the whole world to drag them away—the tiny fingers locked together in a paroxysm of love and terror. Whang stood on guard before the two, showing his canine tooth with a menacing air, which kept every one else at bay.

Ting stood holding his sides, and shrieking with laughter.

Greville had recourse to his ready cash, to show the woman their visit was a friendly one.

"Well?" she asked in Chinese, as she clutched at the ever-welcome coin. "Do you want her back? You might bring her up respectably. I can't let her grow up with feet like a boy to please a set of ignorant fung-yang, that bring nothing but ill-luck to the city; and I won't."

The cash had made an impression. Greville went on emptying his pockets, reserving only his penknife. Out came his dog-whistle, a few marbles, a bit of Chinese ink, his English purse with its steel clasp. That he perceived had caught her eye. He opened his little pocket-book, took the pencil out of its holder, and scribbled on the pages to show its use.

"No likee that," said Ting, who insisted on examining everything with the utmost curiosity; adding, with a knowing wink, "Pen ink itself."

Last of all, Greville produced a tiny thermometer, which shut up like a pencil-case. It had been his father's, and was one of his treasures. He did not suppose the woman would care for that, as she could not know its use.

Greville held up one trifle after another, promising to give them all to her if she would let them have Koh-pi back.

Ting stepped in between them with an impatient shrug, and catching up the little articles one by one as Greville exhibited them, he dropped them into his

capacious sleeve. The duck-boy was still at his mother's elbow, entreating and persuading.

He looked round the wretched hovel. The centipedes and spiders were scampering over the walls; the floor was a mass of dirt; the cooking-pots were empty; a broken stool, a bundle of rags, and a few cracked bowls, all told the same story. Were they not poorer than ever? he asked. His father would have to sell his little brother, as he had sold him.

The poor woman began to cry. It was the dread of her life.

"What do you want your little dust-pan for?" asked Ting. "No too plenty rice. She eatee good bowlful soon; you all starvee by-and-by."

Just as Ting was pressing home this all-powerful argument the father came in sight — an odious-looking fellow, chewing opium all day, and caring for nothing but how to get some more. He had been driven out of his home by poor Koh-pi's shrieks when her toes were broken, and had gone to sleep in a neighbour's hut. He came up shuffling, leading his youngest boy.

Ting began his chaffering in earnest, bargaining for Koh-pi's return as he would have haggled over the sale of a basket of fish. Any bystander would have thought they were quarrelling desperately; but Ting knew what he was about. He sent the duck-boy to his sampan for a basket of fish, which he set down in the middle of the hut.

The woman's hungry eyes grew brighter at the sight; but the man held back to see how much he could get.

One by one, Ting produced the treasures in his sleeve. There was a pen which inked itself! What was that worth? whole strings of cash. Greville took back the pencil and cut the point. This was a wonderful performance. Koh-pi's father and mother crowded up so closely to watch it, Greville was almost knocked backwards by the intolerable smell of dirt. His impulse was to rush out of the hut, but for Koh-pi's sake he stood his ground.

"Boo-oo," said the man. "It is not the pen inks itself; it is the knife puts the ink into it. Give me the knife."

Greville would not understand, as he could not let his penknife go.

The woman snatched at his necktie. He took it off readily.

Cornelia had learned enough Chinese from Marweh to catch the spirit of what was going on. She leaned eagerly forward. Whang turned and licked her cheek.

"It is Koh-pi's ransom," said Greville in reply, as he threw his collar on the heap.

She put her handkerchief and thimble into his hand.

Had she nothing else?

Only a little scent-bottle, which was nearly empty.

Greville handed it on to Ting.

"Help me, Grevie," she cried, bending her head towards him. "Unclasp this necklace; mother would say 'Do' if she were here."

Cornelia had managed to untie her sash without leaving go of Koh-pi.

Greville held up necklace and sash as if he were conducting a mock auction. He saw a change in the ugly yellow face. The duck-boy took the necklace and twisted it round his mother's arm; but the man snatched it away.

The woman began to say they might have the child again. She did not mind about that; but she must keep her a month or two to attend to her feet.

The only spark of motherly feeling she had seemed to lead her to this decision.

Old Ting swept the heap on the floor into his capacious sleeves, and heaved up his basket of fish with a knowing grin.

"Chin-chin," he repeated formally. "When you bring your daughter to English Concession, then you get good *cumshu* [present]. Go findee more. Dust-pans all too plenty. Little English missee no wantee long."

Greville stuck his hat on his head and marched out of the hut with a resolute air. Cornelia would have laid poor Koh-pi down, but the wee fingers tightened round her neck with a convulsive clasp, from which she could not release herself.

Whang alone never stirred.

"Too plenty fools; losee good chancee," observed Ting contemptuously, with one foot outside the door.

"Lookee!" cried the father, and the chaffering began again.

Greville followed Whang's example, and paced round the outside of the hut, not a little dismayed to perceive clusters of shaven heads peering out of the miserable rush-pens around him, which he had mistaken for fowl-houses. He saw now they had landed at one of the worst of the city slums. He thought of yesterday's riot, and longed to get back to the boat.

The gabble among the disputing trio at the door of the hut grew deafening. Ting was once more exhibiting the treasures in his sleeve. Greville caught the glance of greedy eyes which seemed longing to come in for a share. Ting was holding up the thermometer, which excited an immense amount of interest in the bystanders, who were taking sides—some of them upholding Ting, others shouting out encouragingly to Koh-pi's father. Ting was gravely describing the thermometer as an instrument for telling when thieves were on the road.

As there was nothing in the hut to tempt the most rapacious robber, his enthusiastic praises failed to excite a desire for its possession in its owner's breast.

"Will it work both ways?" asked a hideous-looking

creature in the gathering crowd—"tell the thieves when the police are coming?"

This witticism called forth a general laugh.

Ting saw his market was rising, and unblushingly vaunted the thermometer's powers as a detective on the thieves' side.

The woman still shook her head; and, hobbling a step or two nearer, pointed to Greville's feet.

"Want my boots!" exclaimed Greville, kicking them off, too glad to conclude the strange bargain at any price.

The thermometer disappeared once more in the folds of Ting's sleeve pocket; and rubbing his hands together, he turned to the father with a laugh of satisfaction. A dozen voices united in maintaining the "cumshu" was "too plenty big."

"Now, missee, take away de leetle dust-pan!" shouted Ting.

Cornelia appeared at the door of the hut with Koh-pi hanging round her neck, shrieking with pain at every movement. The child was far too heavy for Cornelia to carry. She just managed to haul her out of the hut and set her on Whang's broad back.

The brother and sister had but one thought—to get away as fast as they could, for fear Koh-pi's father and mother should change their minds.

The duck-boy crept noiselessly to Greville's side, and pointed to an ill-looking, baboon-like fellow who was trying to force Ting to bring out the ther-

mometer from its place of concealment. He carried in his hand a piece of iron tube, which he evidently used for a gun.

Greville felt that the duck-boy was trying to put him on his guard. He had no doubt the low whisper in his ear meant "Beware!" and he acted accordingly.

Pressing the palms of his hands together, with a courteous chin-chin, he crossed to Cornelia. The mud stuck to his feet at every step. He tried to scrape it off against a stone, and cut his shoeless sole on the sharp edge.

"Waitee," cried Ting; "I carry you on me back."

But Greville treated the proposition with disdain. "Carry the baby," he retorted.

Ting shook his sleeves and showed his empty hands, pretending to have lost the little white stick which possessed such magical powers. Eager yellow hands were scrambling for it in the mud.

"He who finds may keep," laughed Greville, jumping through the mud leap-frog fashion. "If we can only get back to the boat while the search lasts, I do not care who has it," he said to Cornelia, who was walking off with Whang, casting frightened glances over her shoulder to see if he were following. Her joy at Koh-pi's rescue was urging her on, and her fears acted as an additional spur.

"If I could only be feet for three!" she exclaimed.

"Could you stick a toe in one of my boots, Grev, and hop to the boat?"

"And all come down together!" he retorted. "Not for me."

The duck-boy was following them with wistful eyes. He knew that Ting was amusing the group by the hut, to give them time to get away. Peals of laughter greeted his little brother's attempts to fasten the European boots. Everybody seemed in high good-humour. He ran up to Greville, pushed his brother's bamboo into his hand, and repeated his warning as plainly as he could. He stretched out his arms to Koh-pi, and then drew back, afraid of the dog. A second thought seemed to strike him, and he shyly offered a hand to Greville. They had not far to go. The ducks were scampering back into the water. The boat was waiting. The old grandfather saw them coming, and stepped on shore to help them into the boat. The duck-boy picked up a purple feather one of his finest drakes had just shaken from its splendid crest, and stuck it in his little sister's hair. Even then Koh-pi's pouting lips scarcely condescended to receive the brotherly kiss he was longing to give her before they parted.

"Oo is so horrid dirty," she said, looking him all over.

"Hush, darling! he is your brother," cried Cornelia, growing bolder as she felt herself swung into the boat; and in another minute Koh-pi and Greville were

beside her. Ting was hurrying down the bank to join them. Whang sprang on to the deck and coiled himself round at her feet.

Greville's penknife was in his hand. He drew Koh-pi to him, and gently lifting one poor foot after the other, cut the silken cords which bound them before any one knew what he was doing.

"We shall soon be home," said Cornelia, as she soothed her frantic cries.

The little boat was ploughing its way through the yellow mud; the ducks were quacking in farewell chorus, and the blue sky overhead seemed full of rejoicing. The lurking danger the duck-boy had so clearly intimated was surely over. It was a moment of sunny happiness to Greville and Cornelia, as the cool spray from the river and the lulling motion of the boat brought sleep to the little sufferer. Even the cormorants were growing friendly.

The boat was pushing out into the middle of the stream. Ting explained to Greville that he must cross to the other bank to land the old grandfather, who lived in one of the villages beyond the city. This was very unwelcome news, but it was of no use to object. Ting had got back Koh-pi; he must do as he liked.

"Don't be worried, Greville," said Cornelia, "if he rows us through the city; father will know we cannot help it."

CHAPTER XX.

A NIGHT OF PERIL.

THE tent-shaped roofs of Hankow were lessening in the distance; but Ting rowed on, regardless of Greville's remonstrances. The village home of the aged Chinaman proved to be many a mile beyond the city walls. Cornelia was growing sleepy, when a cluster of mud-built hovels came in sight, and the sampan drew to the bank. After many affectionate leave-takings the grandfather stepped on shore. His daughter insisted on accompanying him to the door of his hut. Ting would have gone too—it was but proper respect to show to a parent in Chinese eyes—if he could have left the boat. Anyways, the boy, who was the pride of the family, must be shown to his grandmother.

"How long will they be gone?" asked Greville in despair.

"Just a minute," answered Ting, as he stretched himself on the deck for a sound sleep.

The minute extended to an hour.

Old-ah-you busied herself flapping away the flies

from the sleeper. Koh-pi's head lay in Cornelia's lap, and she slumbered on, undisturbed by the near neighbourhood of the cormorants.

It was such a comfort to have her at rest that Greville and Cornelia sat without speaking, even to each other.

They were watching the traffic gliding past them down stream. They did not notice a boat stealing up behind them until Old-ah-you gave a scream, and a man leaped from it on to the deck of the sampan. Greville and Cornelia crouched back under the awning, not knowing what would come next. Old-ah-you pulled at her father to waken him. As the fisherman roused to consciousness, the stranger's hand was in his sleeve. A struggle ensued. Whang gave an angry growl, and sprang up with his hair bristling before Cornelia and Koh-pi. Greville's arm went round his sister's waist protectingly.

There were a thud and a splash: Ting was tumbled overboard. The sampan rocked dangerously. Greville caught hold of the awning-pole and held Cornelia fast.

The cormorants fluttered wildly about the deck, beating with their strong wings, and drowning all other sounds with their discordant cries.

"Whang! Whang!" shouted Greville as soon as he could make himself heard, "over and save him."

The good dog dashed between the flowering plants and caught the sinking Ting by the sleeve. The

stranger seized the oar and rowed up stream, away from him, with all his might.

"Take him to bank, Whang! take him to bank!" shouted Greville, as he felt the distance between them increasing.

Koh-pi and Old-ah-you were screaming in concert. The stranger looked round angrily, and struck at Old-ah-you to silence her. She caught hold of the cord of the nearest cormorant, and was dragged backwards. The man kicked her out of his way as he would have kicked a football. The boat gave a lurch; she was over on the other side. The gourd-skin was round her waist, and she floated round the boat, still clutching at the cord. Greville pulled at the end attached to the side with all his might, to try to draw her in. The fellow in possession lifted his oar from the water, and aimed a blow at Greville's head; but he dodged under the awning, and escaped it. Then he saw him take a knife from his girdle and cut the cord.

The bird, released from the weight of the boat, soared over Old-ah-you with outspread wings, bearing her along like a living sail. A carp leaped up in the water. The excited bird was after it with a swoop, which sent Old-ah-you bobbing up and down; but she still held to the cord. The cormorant soared aloft with his prize in his beak. Its golden scales were glittering in the setting sun. The bird poised in the air, looked down at Old-ah-you, and seemed disposed to return to the boat with its fish, according to

old habit; but its companions showed such a determination to dispute possession, it changed its purpose. Greville watched it beating away down stream to its more familiar haunts, with Old-ah-you still in tow.

"It will go to bank at last to devour its fish, and drag her after it," whispered Greville.

"Will our turn come next?" asked Cornelia hoarsely, putting her arm round Greville's neck.

"I can swim," he answered.

"Can the man hear us?" she asked again. "Watch him. How hard he rows!"

Greville did watch, and recognized the ill-looking fellow who had wanted his thermometer. "He is one of the river-thieves," he thought, "and the duck-boy knew it. He must have believed all the rubbish Ting was talking, and so he followed him to get the thermometer. It seems too absurd, but it may cost us our lives."

He grasped Cornelia's hand, and they sat in silence as the darkness fell around them. Koh-pi had cried herself to sleep again, Greville's head was nodding with irresistible weariness. Cornelia offered her shoulder for a pillow, and roused herself to watch. A second boat was alongside, with one or two dark figures seated in it. No doubt it was the one from which their captor had leaped into the sampan, and the sailors in it were his comrades. She knew they were speaking. Suddenly the boats parted company;

there were the signalling flashes of a lantern, and an answering call from the shore.

The rising moon shed its first straggling beams on an altered landscape. The vast plains around Hankow had vanished; jagged rocks and wooded hill-slopes rose on either side.

The unusual silence around her was broken by a scuffling sound from the shore. There was just light enough to convince her of the change, and shadow enough to mystify all she saw. She guessed the truth. They had left the broad river of Golden Sand, and were rowing up one of the many creeks which fed it.

The touch of a light finger roused Greville, and a low whisper told him of the discovery. He was broad awake in a moment. A nightingale trilled forth its enchanting jug-jug, and some night-bird gave a startled scream; not a junk was visible. There was no doubt left—they were in the hands of the creek-pirates, the river-thieves. He had heard tales enough about them at his father's table. He had heard Mr. Wymering declare they were plentiful as frogs in all the great Chinese water-ways.

He took out his knife, felt for its sharpest, finest blade, and leaning over Cornelia, he cut a square from her white dress.

"What is that for?" she asked.

"Hush! I am going to write a letter," he answered.

"But you have no ink, no pencil; we have given everything away," she returned.

"Here is nature's own red ink, always ready," he retorted, slightly stabbing his knife into his left thumb, and writing with the bloody point upon the square of muslin he had stretched tightly on his knee. Cornelia bent over him and read: "I, G. Lynthorne and my sister, are being carried away down one of the creeks by river-thieves. Whoever takes this to the English Concession at Hankow will have a sure reward."

"Date it," whispered Cornelia, and he did so. Her eyes were fastened on a black speck in the water, which seemed to follow their boat.

The hungry cormorants were fishing on their own account. Greville had so often watched them at work, he knew what to do. Fo was diving. When he reappeared with a fish in his beak, Greville pulled in his line, and the bird obediently dropped it on the deck of the sampan. Greville picked it up and offered it to the man at the oar. It was taken and flung into the tank, with a nod that told Greville he was at liberty to go on with his little game. He started another bird. The man watched him for a few minutes, and then bent over his oar as before. Greville tied his letter to the ring round the cormorant's neck, and noiselessly cut the cord which held him.

Up rose the fisher-bird, with a scream of delight at its unwonted liberty. He watched it wheeling round and round, and then, as he expected, it soared

away after its mate, who had gone with Old-ah-you. It was true, it might hover about for days, but sooner or later it was sure to return to that part of the river where it had been used to fish for years. The ring round its neck would mark it a tamed bird, and some thrifty fisherman would be sure to recapture it before long. No Chinaman would ever destroy a bit of writing. His writing might be shown to one of the compradors; there were many in Hankow who could read English. Yes, it was a real chance. It might reach his father at last. Anyhow it was worth trying.

"Grev!" exclaimed Cornelia joyfully, pointing to the black spot which had been absorbing all her attention, "what is that?"

"A dog," he answered doubtfully.

"A dog!" she repeated. "It is Whang."

The moon was riding overhead in all her midnight glory. Her fitful radiance was shed full upon their pale English faces. The robber's oar gave a feebler stroke as he looked them all over, and stretching out one of his horny hands, he gave a tug at Greville's jacket.

It was off in a moment and presented to him. Greville knew their only hope of safety lay in conciliating him.

Cornelia softly covered up Koh-pi with a piece of mat which had served Old-ah-you for a bed. The child was still fast asleep, and she trusted the robber had not yet discovered her existence. As the boat

slackened, Whang drew nearer, barking vociferously. But the man was just now intent upon the contents of the cupboard in the floor. He found a cooking-pot and a bag of rice, and signed to Greville to light up the fire. Whilst the rice was boiling he continued his investigation of poor Ting's stores. He came upon a bundle of Old-ah-you's cast-off clothes. He threw them at Cornelia with an imperious gesture, which could not be misunderstood.

Greville's heart died within him. Was all this undressing preparatory to a kick overboard?

Cornelia fled into the darkest corner under the awning, and quickly reappeared, looking the queerest little creature in the world in the dark-blue tunic so high round the throat and short above the knees. She looked so piteous, with her muslin dress in one hand and her English hat in the other, it made the fellow grin as he took them from her.

What would come next? Greville grew resolute to get Whang on board.

If their captor was a true Chinese, the safest moment would be when he was eating his rice.

Greville looked about for the white-painted board, and tried to fix it on the side of the boat, as if he were intent upon catching more fish. A soft whistle brought Whang round. When the fellow produced his chop-sticks and began his meal, Greville flung the end of the line he had cut from the cormorant's collar to his dog, and pulled him up the sloping board.

Whang shook the water from his dripping ears and flew at the robber's throat. The fight between them was desperate. The boat rocked beneath their feet. Cornelia grew dizzy, and clung to Greville, who held on by the awning.

"O Whang, Whang! did I pull you in for this?" he groaned, feeling as if he had blundered madly. Up woke Koh-pi with a scream, and rolled over and over on the reeling deck.

"She will be overboard! she'll be drowned!" shrieked Cornelia. "Tie her, Greville! tie her!"

The line which he had thrown to Whang was still in his hand; down he went on hands and knees, and was knotting it round Koh-pi's waist, when the boat capsized. Cornelia was flung over his head into the middle of the stream, whilst he and Koh-pi went under.

The boat, left to itself, had struck against a mud-bank, which are always forming in the Chinese streams. In point of fact, their vast monotonous plains, their lakes and their morasses, have been formed by the mud of ages, always washing down from the far-distant Thibetan hills.

From this cause alone the rivers are continually changing their course, washing away their banks on one hand, or leaving unexpected accumulations on the other.

It was well for Greville now that he had lost his jacket and boots. He became entangled in the awning as he went down, and was sucked under with it; but

one of its poles stuck fast in the mud, and managing to get hold of this, he swung himself to the top of the bank. Here he stood waist-high in water, dragging up Koh-pi after him.

But Cornelia! where was Cornelia? The rocks behind him echoed back his cry.

Whang, who had left go of his antagonist in the general overthrow, was swimming round and round, sniffing at the cormorants, who were diving up and down, ready to renew the fight if he dared to approach within reach of their tether, which still secured them to the upturned boat.

Whang was preparing to dash between them to Greville's assistance, when he was attracted by something in mid-stream. He gave a sudden dart forward, head under water, and was lost to sight for a few brief but awful moments, when Greville poised himself on the sandbank to recover breath. He mounted Koh-pi on his shoulder. Their lives depended on his presence of mind.

The moon shone full on the water; the rocks behind him lay in shadow.

There was the robber making towards them with vigorous strokes. Like all the river-men, he seemed half amphibious, and thought no more of a sudden plunge than Whang. Like Old-ah-you, he had been used to it from infancy.

It was worse than folly to stand there watching until he came up. Greville hesitated no longer. He

got Koh-pi well on his back, and with a broken pole from the awning to help him, he waded to the shore; scrambled in the dark over loose stones and sharp points of rocks, until his feet were once more pressing solid ground, and the cool touch of growing leaves swept his forehead.

The only sounds which broke the stillness convinced him the pirate was at work righting the boat. Greville's first thought was to hide himself whilst the man was thus employed. On he went, groping his way through the blackest of the shadows, between bushes and boulder stones, with Koh-pi on his back, too frightened to scream.

After a while he heard Whang barking wildly; and having walked himself nearly dry, he sat down on a stone to rest.

"Ko home," said Koh-pi, stroking his cheek. "No go boatee any more."

He pulled her on his knees and hushed the prattling voice which might betray them. They were out of the pirate's sight, he was sure, but were they out of his hearing? Greville was half afraid to summon Whang by the faintest whistle.

"He will find us," he thought. "He will scent us soon."

But to his surprise no glossy black head came poking through the bushes. A snake hissed out from under the stone, and made him spring upright. The gray of the morning shone faintly on the opposite

bank of the river, which gleamed between the parting leaves of the thicket in which he had hidden himself. Growing bolder with the daylight, Greville got up stealthily and peeped out. The boat and the man were gone, but there was Whang, seated contentedly on the river-bank, making grabs at the water-beetles which came too near his ebon dignity.

It was strange that, for once in his life, Whang should have been so stupid as not to have found them when they were so near. Greville caught up Koh-pi, who was growing sleepy again with the daylight, and making his way through the bushes, began to call him, softly at first, as if he were half afraid of his own voice in that wild solitude.

Whang pricked up his ears and stood upright, wagging his tail, but would not leave the spot. Greville ran forward eagerly and caught hold of Cornelia's outstretched hand. There she lay in a little hole, covered with long, trailing water-plants and yellow mud.

"Have you come to look for me?" she asked, rubbing her eyes. "I have been here all night. Whang pulled me out of the water, and he stayed by me. I thought you were all gone. I felt so dreamy and cold; but Whang was warm, and he put his paws over me. It seems so strange. Greville dear, where are we, and how shall we get home?"

"We are somewhere in the Chinese wilds," he answered, laying Koh-pi on the ground, and helping

Cornelia to her feet. "If we keep by the water's edge, we may be able to stop a passing boat, and find somebody or other to row us down the river."

Cornelia was stiff and cramped, but not otherwise hurt. As she rose to her feet with Greville's help, a nightingale resumed its plaintive trill, and an early kingfisher went skimming over the creek. They walked up and down for a while, looking this way and that for the least sign of boat or sail.

The creek was shallow, and in its native muddiness looked like oily pea-soup; but in places it was overhung with rugged red granite rocks, down which a dash of clear, bright water played and sparkled in its foamy speed, and in the cleft from which it came there was a mass of foliage and flowers.

Azaleas in full bloom, with tempting clusters of their bright-hued blossoms, were opening to the morning dew; festoons of wild white roses were mingling their perfume with the orange flowers, as the morning breezes fanned the faces of the children. The crow of the wild pheasant arose from the tangle, and larks and thrushes joined the nightingale in its *réveil.*

Koh-pi softly whispered, "Lord, remember me." Cornelia turned and kissed her. Greville choked back the thoughts, too deep for words to express, as he scrambled upwards to catch the drops of water trembling in the flowery cups, and tear down dripping branches to carry back to his companions.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STEPS IN THE ROCK.

AS the morning sun arose, the loss of their hats obliged the children to seek the shelter of the rocks.

"Never mind," said Greville, "now we have found each other. I shan't believe we are in China if we do not come upon some of those everlasting mud huts before long."

"Hark!" cried Cornelia, putting her hand to her ear. "Is not that the toll of a distant bell?"

Even Koh-pi was hushed to listen. They hurried past a bend in the rocks, and heard it still more clearly. Their aimless wanderings had found a guide. They left the shore to follow the dim, faint, echoing sound, growing louder and clearer as they proceeded.

The solemn toll was repeated about every thirty seconds, with unvarying exactness. The children were overawed by the wild, weird echoes reverberating from rock to rock, and looked at each other in silence.

Would it never cease? The boom grew louder still. They were forcing their way through shrub

and tangle, stepping over stones and wading through shallows to the very foot of the rock from which it seemed to descend.

"Look up!" cried Cornelia joyfully, pointing to a narrow winding path leading upwards, with dozens of cut-out steps here and there to help the dangerous ascent.

"Will you stay here while I climb up and see where it will take us?" asked Greville; but Cornelia shook her head.

"Whatever happens we will keep together," she said. "It would just be as dangerous to meet the wretched Chinamen in the wilds as it was to meet the river-thief. I dare not be left behind."

Greville mounted Koh-pi on his shoulder once again, and began the toilsome climb. Their only hope of accomplishing it was to hurry on before the scorching heat of the noon. Cornelia, resolute not to be left again, held on to Greville, and never once suffered herself to look down, for fear she should fall from the dizzying height. The path led them to a tiny glen, where a tumbling cascade turned an "overshot" water-wheel, which struck the great bell attached to it with ceaseless regularity. Not far from it was an outside ladder-staircase, leading to a natural archway, the entrance of some rocky cavern. In the front of this archway a terrace had once been formed; it was now overgrown with banyan and bamboo, looking down upon an impenetrable mass of leafy tangle.

This living wall protected and screened the cavernous recesses within the archway, and afforded shelter to a variety of wild animals, if such things could be allowed to exist in China. But what else could account for the grunting and snorting which were rousing Whang to indignation?

Greville sat down at the foot of the ladder, and laid his laughing burden on the grass: for Koh-pi had caught sight of a butterfly as splendid as if it had been arrayed in jewels, and she was calling to her foo to get it. "Quick, in a minute!"

Cornelia gave her wild flowers in its stead, as she seated herself by Greville to consider their next step.

He was for marching up boldly, Chinese fashion, without the ceremony of a knock, or waiting to ask permission.

"Go in and beg for bread," added Cornelia, as a flight of birds swept over their heads and alighted among the terrace trees. "I shall look like a beggar in this old blue dress," she went on; "and oh, I am so hungry."

"If it should be the pirate's castle," suggested Greville, looking upwards and resting his bleeding feet by turns. "It is the queerest place I ever saw in this queer land."

The boom of the tolling bell so close beside them almost took Cornelia's breath away. "Will it never cease?" she asked.

"We can't stay here!" exclaimed Greville, his hesi-

tation vanquished by the unearthly sounds, while Koh-pi began to cry from pure terror. He got her on to his back, and was half-way up the ladder, when he once more felt the sun beat down upon his uncovered head, with a force that was turning him sick and faint. Cornelia ran up after him with a lapful of grass and fern.

"It is not a hat, it is not a sunshade, it is nothing but a little thatch," she said, as she twisted the long stalks and leaves together, and flung them over his head, also making a similar shield for her own before they proceeded.

It was all too quickly done. Her weaving was falling to pieces as they stepped upon the grassy terrace, with Whang holding fast by her dress. They paused to wonder for the fiftieth time if Ting had got safely to his wife, as Greville quite thought he would; and if he were looking at that minute for his boat and Old-ah-you. "But he will never find us," they decided. "Nobody ever will, right up here."

Then Cornelia whispered just one word: "Remember."

"That is our watchword," answered Greville, walking doggedly on through the shadowy archway, without the least idea of what might be awaiting them beyond it.

A pig poked its head out of the underwood on the terrace, to stare at Cornelia, who was following her brother as closely as she could. She almost started,

although it was only a pig, for its face was shrunken and grizzly with exceeding age. Its withered ears flapped feebly, as its shaking limbs tried to force their way through the tangle of leaves. Whang sprang at it with a bark and drove it backwards. Cornelia crept a little nearer to Greville, and the two stood side by side beneath the gateway.

Before them was a building not unlike a picturesque Swiss chalet, with its fretwork roof and wooden walls. All around it were the arching and precipitous sides of a natural cavern. At some period of its existence the roof had fallen through. The children looked up in amazement to the lofty dome, and saw the blue sky of summer shining overhead.

The sun blazed down, but the deep descent tempered its scorching rays. Numberless little rills were trickling from the rocky walls, forming stalactites in shady corners, and nourishing tufts of clinging, large bright-leaved plants in crevices where the sunbeams fell.

At one particular spot the hollow tube of a straggling bamboo root had forced its way through a cleft in the solid arch of the rock, and through this water-pipe of nature's own making a pure cold crystal stream poured like a chain of silver into a reservoir below. From this reservoir a second rill crossed the floor of the cavern, and fed an odd-shaped pool near some little wooden huts at the back of the larger building.

A few antiquated crows were flying about the entrance, where Greville still lingered to examine the strange elaborate devices and curious inscriptions carved on the face of the rock.

"Where are we?" asked Cornelia under her breath, pointing to some harmless-looking old men who were dawdling about the interior, with the easy air of old folks at home. They wore no particular dress, and their heads were completely shaven. One of them had got a little basket in his hand, and was apparently feeding a few fowls.

"They are not Chinese," said Greville decidedly, as he watched their dilatory ways.

"They have no pig-tails," remarked Cornelia.

"They are Buddhist monks!" cried Greville, brightening. "The Chinese despise them; but they never hurt anything. We may safely go in."

Three skinny wrinkled old men looked up with an exclamation of "Eh-yaw!" but there was no resentment in the tone, only surprise and wonder at Cornelia's pink cheeks, which were flushing with shyness and fatigue. When she saw all their eyes were upon her, she stepped before Greville, and putting her fingers to her lips pretended to eat. Then she held out her empty hand towards them with a supplicating air. It was food she wanted, that was plain; but what would such a strange, outlandish little animal be likeliest to eat? They called to their companions to come and look at her. They pointed to the yellow

mud staining her ragged clothes, and the long, trailing water-weeds which still clung about her. Greville was busy transferring the cord from Koh-pi's waist to Whang's collar, for fear he should conceive it his duty to charge into the midst of the tottering old men to protect Cornelia. So Koh-pi was laid on the ground for a minute, and the fowls, with a free-and-easy assurance, came and pecked the rose leaves from her pinafore. One of the old *bonzes*, as the priests are called in China, picked her up and held her beside Cornelia by way of contrast. When the buzz of curiosity subsided, they invited the children to sit down on a bench by the rocks near the entrance, and one of their number went out on the terrace to gather a handful of sweet-smelling tea-leaves and flowers.

Whilst the fragrant cup was preparing, Greville tried to ascertain if there was one among them who could speak a word of English or even of "pidgin." But they only shook their heads and smiled. Then he drew with his penknife on the ground the outline of a boat turned over, hoping the old men might understand it was a boat they wanted to take them home again.

Never had anything seemed so delightful as that cup of native tea, or more welcome than the bowl of steaming rice which followed it. Then Greville drew the attention of every one of the kind old men to the boat he had drawn on the floor. They smiled

and shook their heads as before; evidently they had no boat belonging to them. Then they fetched their patriarch, a very decrepit old creature, who was led about by two young lads. He came out of the building with the fretwork roof, which Greville guessed was their temple by the scent of the joss-sticks burning within. He looked and listened and talked, and laid his dirty shrivelled hand on Cornelia's head. Then he sent off one of his companions for a great bowl of boiling water with a torn rag floating in the middle of it.

The old men stood nodding and smiling as if they were saying, "It is so nice, and all for you."

Cornelia and Greville looked at each other in dismay as they asked, "Whatever shall we do if they expect us to drink all that?"

But no; its real purpose soon became apparent. A grotesque-looking baboon of a man plunged his hand into it, and catching the rag, proceeded to wash Cornelia's face, pointing out with exceeding admiration that the colour of her cheeks was increasing. Greville petitioned by the most energetic dumb-show at his command to be permitted to wash his own.

The bonzes had no fear of Whang. They led him up to the reservoir to drink. Every living thing which chose to make their cavern its home was freely welcome.

The meal concluded with a bowlful of boiled ginger root, a favourite vegetable with these simple-minded

brothers, who never tasted animal food, but far too hot for Greville or Cornelia to manage.

One of the brothers now appeared with a palm-leaf hat about the size of an umbrella and an old pair of rush slippers, which he offered to Greville, and then led him down the ladder and across the glen, motioning to him to point out the way by which they had come.

Greville flung a stone in the direction of the creek, which shone in the sunlight far below their feet, and pointed in his turn to his own draggled clothes and muddy stockings.

Another of the bonzes had joined them, and waved his hands in pitying sympathy, and turned away.

Greville went back to the cavern. "Cornelia," he said thoughtfully, as he seated himself beside her on the bench, "how long we may stay here we do not know; and how are we to get away? Could Whang find his way back to the Concession if we tied a letter to his collar? If father only knew where we were, he would send a boat to fetch us, we know."

"The cormorant may have got home by this time," suggested Cornelia, who was loath to entertain the thought of sending Whang away.

"Yes," urged Greville; "it may or it may not. This would give one more chance if I could think of anything to write on."

He pulled at the sleeve of his shirt. It was stained all over, and torn to ribbons. Cornelia's blue dress was too dark to be of any use; and Koh-pi's pinafore,

in which her own mother had dressed her, was of a similar material. What was to be done?

"Prick the words on a leaf!" cried Cornelia brightly; and clasping her arms round Whang's neck, she whispered her entreaties in his ear. "You brought back Koh-pi's sock. Could you, would you do this for us, you good old boy? or is it too long a journey for any dog?"

He stretched his fore-paws on her lap and looked up in her face, trying to understand.

"Stop!" said Greville. "A leaf won't do; it would be so easily destroyed. A bit of wood would be better; I could cut the letters well enough with my knife. A strip of bark even would do."

"There is another way, Grev: I'll mark it with my hair. Prick a tiny hole with the point of your knife, and push the hair through so," she went on, pulling out one of her longest hairs, and inserting it between the loose threads of her coarse tunic.

"My dear," he exclaimed, "it would take you for ever. I'll try and make these old men understand I want something to write on."

Accordingly, he took his knife in his hand like a pen, and imitated the action of writing on the seat of the bench, and then looked up in their faces inquiringly.

He had made his want obvious. There was a little consultation; then they led him to the steps of the small hill temple, but they did not let him go in.

He caught a glimpse of a monstrous gilt idol and a vase of fortune-telling slips; and as letter-writing and fortune-telling went on side by side in the joss-houses in the city, Greville's spirits rose. The kind old bonzes found him a sheet of yellowish paper, two writing-brushes, a bit of Chinese ink, and a slab to mix it on.

He tried to express his gratitude as he spread the precious materials on the temple steps; and tilting the huge palm-leaf hat over his eyes, he began to write, or rather to paint, a similar letter to the one he had tied to the neck of the cormorant, adding a description of the steps in the rock and of the monastery in the cavern where they had found a refuge.

He made his letters large and plain, so that any one might read them easily if he knew anything of English. It was more like printing than writing; all the better.

Greville was just going to show it to Cornelia, when the two childish old bonzes, who had been watching his proceedings with the greatest interest, held out their hands to take it away.

Greville's "No" was an animated one indeed.

"Eh-yaw!" they exclaimed, enforcing their "You must give it to us" in a still more emphatic manner by suddenly rolling him over in the dust and forcibly taking it away.

Greville went back to Cornelia dreadfully woe-begone and crestfallen.

"All the conceit is out of me now," he said, with a groan. "If poor Raynham could but see me! I should not have given the letter up so easily if I had not been so shaky from last night. But I dare not get it away again by force after they had been so good to us; I couldn't, Cornelia. I never dreamed they would do such a thing—never!"

"Look, Grev," interrupted Cornelia; "they are going to take it somewhere."

The two watched in silence, feeling there was no redress.

One of the bonzes fetched his palm-leaf hat and staff, and putting the letter in his sleeve, started off with it across the glen.

Where could he be going with it?

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MANDARIN AT HOME.

GREVILLE'S disappointment ended in a long sound sleep on the steps of the temple, from which he was awakened by Cornelia whispering anxiously, "Somebody is coming."

One or two of the bonzes were standing on the terrace watching a party of coolies crossing the glen. They were bringing with them an empty sedan chair.

Cornelia was in a flutter of excitement. "Grev, Grev, they are coming to fetch us! There is the old man behind them who carried away your letter."

"Prisoners or visitors, which shall we be?" asked Greville desperately.

"We may as well think we are visitors," she said. "It will not make much difference, for we cannot help ourselves either way; we must go if these old men send us."

This was so obvious Greville only groaned at the thought of leaving so safe a retreat.

"Where is Koh-pi?" he asked, rousing himself.

"Feeding the tame carp in the fish-pond by the

huts; it is full," was the answering whisper. "I left her with Whang to come and tell you."

Greville was broad awake now. The coolies were entering the court. There was plenty of chattering and gesticulating as they rested on the ground round the archway.

Whilst this was going forward, Greville ran round to the fish-pond and mounted Koh-pi on his shoulder; whilst Cornelia clasped her hand firmly in Whang's collar. He looked into her face with his questioning eyes.

"Whang is ready for anything," she said, "and so must we be."

"Walkee down!" shouted the leader of the coolies in a tone of command, as he pointed to the ladder-staircase which he had just ascended.

Greville stepped forward. "Friend or foe, we must offer the right hand of fellowship," he said aside to Cornelia, "and make the best of it."

The queer old bonzes had all gathered on the terrace to see them depart, scarcely understanding their English thanks, and mumbling a few charms for the benefit of the little strangers in return.

The leader of the coolies was confidently assuring them he once knew travelling-man who went to the fung-yang's big city, London, where all little girls have red cheeks, and men and women live like birds high up in the air. "Build one house, build another on the top of it, another on the top of that, and

then another, and always sleep, like birds, in the highest."

"Not quite so high as you do up here," laughed Greville, overjoyed to meet with any one who could speak both Chinese and pidgin.

But, alas! the good-hearted bonzes, who spoke a different dialect, understood him not.

As for Cornelia, she was hoisted down the ladder to the waiting sedan *sans cérémonie;* and as the descent was a steep one, the coolie proposed to tie her in. Koh-pi found a bed in the luggage place, under the seat, and Greville squeezed in by Cornelia's side.

There was a double team of coolies to carry them, as the path was a dangerous one, leading over the edge of the glen, so winding and narrow that the skilful coolies could only manage to ascend it by incessant turns and re-turns. But on they went, swinging the light sedan over giddy heights with an indifference which Greville and Cornelia were very far from sharing.

Every now and then the men would stop to change places or recover breath; whilst poor hatless Cornelia had to bend from side to side in her vain attempts to dodge the myriad swarms of dragon-flies which seemed to pursue her. Greville's palm-leaf pent-house would well have covered two, if there had been any way of keeping it on in the midst of the hill breezes.

It was not safe to talk in the hearing of coolies,

who were certain to repeat every word. To whom? That was the question.

They were journeying inland, leaving the river behind them. Greville's most earnest inquiries received no answers from their coolie carriers, who, like the bonzes, regarded them as very strange young animals indeed. One good-natured fellow, perceiving Cornelia's distress, kindly lent her his fan, and stroked her tumbled hair. Two of the bearers were evidently city coolies, one of whom was the leader. The other two were hillside men, who had come to show them the way. As they spoke a different dialect, they had frequent recourse to pidgin even amongst themselves.

They were chaffing the owner of the fan and laughing immoderately. Every time his curious eyes rested upon Cornelia, there was a dig in his side, accompanied with the persuasive suggestion, "Takee home," from one, and "Fillee pipe," from another. They even went so far as to offer to drop her by the way, that he might turn back and "pickee up" when he was off duty.

They all agreed if they carried the boy safely to his destination, that was plenty.

The bare idea filled Cornelia with fresh horror, and she clung a little tighter to Greville, who assured her toughly it was only the coolies' fun.

But his words were stouter than his thoughts, and even he looked round nervously to be sure Whang was closely following.

By considering the place of the sun, Greville tried

to find out in which direction the coolies were taking them. He fondly hoped it was nearer home.

Still on they went, down into a valley so deep and lonely they scarcely felt as if it could be in China. Up once more, across a turfy slope, weird and wild, covered with thousands of closely-packed graves. An eerie feeling, akin to the solemnity produced by the sound of the Buddhist bell, crept over Greville and Cornelia. How many generations of pig-tailed Chinamen were sleeping there around them? A few tall pine trees cast their long shadows across the path.

"Yuenki," cried the coolies, pointing to a hamlet in the distance, and quitting the giant graveyard for a high raised pathway between cultured fields.

"Yuenki." Greville and Cornelia repeated the outlandish name to each other, as they looked eagerly beyond the mud-built cottages to what was evidently the wall of a mandarin's country house.

All in a moment the coolies gave an apologetic grunt, popped the sedan upon the ground, and ran off as hard as they could.

In a few minutes they had vanished utterly; but the sheds and ditches and cabbages surrounding the sedan seemed alive with black eyes and yellow faces grinning at the little strangers. The usual curiosity crowd began to collect; but the country people looked far more friendly and laughing, as if they were intent upon a bit of fun, than their city neighbours would ever have done.

Still it is not nice to be made fun of in such circumstances. Greville called Whang to the front of the chair, and put his arm round Cornelia. One fellow was just about to cross the intervening ditch, when a low growl from Whang warned him off. A second attempt to come a little nearer was greeted with so furious a bark it brought the missing coolies into sight again, with a great bowl of tea in their hands.

Cornelia saw her friend of the fan just slinking out of a weed-grown shed, and gave a shiver. Was that the home where she could "fillee pipe"? "Hold me tight, Greville," she entreated, between laughing and crying, "for fear they should shake me out of the sedan as a bit of useless litter. Chancee who would pick me up."

"You goose!" retorted Greville, whose spirits were rising as he saw before him the arching gateway of the country house, which reason told him was the probable end of their journey.

He was just deciding to get out of the sedan and walk in, feeling sure that in such a house there would be some one able to act as interpreter for them. But the first movement brought back the coolies in haste to their places. The bamboo poles were shouldered, and the sedan went on at a swinging pace. Cornelia looked down upon two feet of slush and water on the other side, representing a field under irrigation, and contemplated the pleasures of a "spill" into its muddy shallows.

"Chancee number done," shouted the foremost coolie, wishing to remind his companion that the last opportunity for dropping Cornelia by the way was passing.

In a moment the mirthful words died on his lip. The mandarin's boy was watching at his master's gate for their return.

The sedan stopped at last. Greville looked up earnestly at a length of dead wall, broken only by the single door at which the boy was standing. Cornelia tried to penetrate the interior, but a screen placed across the entrance shut off the view.

The boy stepped forward, examined the two in the sedan with a critical air, and then turned angrily on the coolies.

These were not the children they had been sent to fetch; these were not the children of a rich English merchant. They must go back and find the right. Where had they picked up these?

The poor coolies looked sheepishly at each other, vociferating at the top of their voices, and protesting in one breath that there were no other children to bring.

Greville could not understand all they were saying, but he felt sure some difficulty had arisen about admitting them.

The coolies persisted there were no more children to fetch; they had brought all three.

"Three!" re-echoed the indignant boy — "three,

when you were sent for two, and there were but two."

"Jumpee down!" cried the leader of the coolies, shooting Greville forward on to the steps, and proceeding humbly to drag out Koh-pi from her impromptu cradle, in which she had been rocked and swung and shaken into the land of forgetfulness and dreams.

The roughness of her awakening produced a series of frantic shrieks. In this confusion Greville found it hopeless to make himself heard. He walked up the steps and looked in at the house-door. He could see nothing but the screen which Cornelia had noticed, and another entrance to the *munshang's* or door-keeper's rooms.

There was the white-robed official himself contentedly smoking his pipe.

"Wantee comprador," said Greville at a venture, well aware that if any comprador could be found he would know enough English to understand him; for no comprador could hold his post of Chinese agent for an English merchant without some knowledge of the language. But in a country house there was no comprador to be found.

"Writee name!" cried the leader of the coolies, confident that he had at last found a way out of the dilemma.

Greville caught at the idea. The boy demurred. Cornelia's suggestion anent the letter came back into

Greville's head most opportunely. He stooped and gathered the broad leaf of a weed springing up beside the wall and pricked his name upon it. "Only take that to your master," he said.

The suspicious boy looked askance at his dirty rags; but the coolies added their persuasions to Greville's, and he was at last prevailed upon to carry the leaf indoors. He came back much faster than he went; but not deigning to explain to the coolies, he beckoned Greville with his fan to follow him round the screen.

Cornelia gathered up her courage to wait for his return.

Greville was led into a paved court, with buildings on either side, apparently appropriated to the use of the servants.

The boy led him across this court, up a flight of steps leading into a wide passage with doors on either hand. Another step or two at the other end opened into a second court; behind this again he caught sight of still more secluded apartments surrounding a lovely garden.

The boy threw open the folding-doors of his master's dining-room, repeating, "Mandarin say he must savoy who you are. What you wantee here?"

"I tellee the mandarin," persisted Greville, painfully conscious of his rags and dirt, as he followed the boy into his master's presence.

Greville found himself in a good-sized dining-room,

with a stone floor and an elaborately-carved roof, composed of an intricate arrangement of beams and cross-bars, which riveted his attention. It was tiled within and without with yellow porcelain. There was no furniture in the middle of the room, but a row of large, heavy, high-backed, hard, uncomfortable-looking chairs stood against the wall down either side, with a little square table to every two chairs.

There was a large round dining-table at one end of the room, and a smaller one at the other. A row of coloured lamps hung down low from the roof, and reflected their brilliant hues in the china monsters and wooden dragons which ornamented the room. There was plenty of silk and gilding among the cabinets and draperies, making poor Greville more nervously alive to the disadvantages of his ragged shirt.

"They will never believe me," he thought, as he looked round at the three Chinese gentlemen just waiting for their dinner.

There they sat, according to Chinese etiquette, in their heavy hats, which ought always to be worn indoors in the presence of company, each with his respective boy behind him, as grave and formal as Pao himself could have desired. Their silk robes slightly rustled as they turned their huge spectacles full upon him.

Greville did his best to go through the threefold ceremony of a Chinese bow. He pressed the palms of his hands together, raised them to his forehead,

and then lowered them to his knees, with as much deference as he could manage.

"What is your honourable name? where do you come from?" asked the cracked voice of the magistrate Greville had seen in the court-room of the Concession.

He was holding in his hand the letter and the leaf on which Greville had written, apparently comparing the signature, and looking, as well he might, excessively puzzled. He had only returned from Hankow that evening to rest himself after the fatigues of the riot, and badly wanted his dinner.

He did not believe the dirty, ragged boy before him could be the son of the wealthy charsee he himself had seen in court the day before. He decided it was some English boy (Greville's complexion convinced him of his nationality) calling himself Lynthorne to secure protection, and was annoyed at having admitted him into the august presence of his honoured guests. With a wave of his hand, which displayed the prodigious length of his nails—which extended at least three-quarters of an inch beyond his finger-tips—he directed his boy to remove him, and detain him until he could investigate the matter.

Greville tried in vain to tell his story; the boy refused to repeat it. Other servants were entering with the rag and the hot-water bowl, the customary prelude to a Chinese dinner. Greville was hurried away.

The boy gave him into the care of another at-

tendant, with orders to take him to the mandarin's secretary.

As Greville was crossing the court, more troubled for Cornelia than for anything else, he encountered another party of visitors who had just arrived. He caught sight of more than one European dress. Here was unexpected hope and help. He turned round quickly and faced the advancing group, determined to throw himself on their protection, or at least enlist their sympathies for Cornelia. What was his joy to recognize the kind face of the Italian sorella!

She had come with one of her elder pupils. The mandarin had consented to try her, and had engaged her as a maid for his daughter. She had travelled with the mandarin's suite; but not being expected, a sufficient number of chairs had not been sent to meet the junk when they landed, and she had been obliged to wait with the priest who accompanied her until the coolies returned.

Greville did not catch one-half of what she was saying, but she knew his voice; and the Chinese girl by her side remembered his English face. Greville did not waste time in unintelligible words: he caught her hand, and defying his coolie guide, he dragged her back to the entrance of the mansion, where he found Cornelia sitting on the door-step; whilst the sulky coolies were being ordered back to find the right children of the English charsee by the mandarin's formidable axe-bearer himself.

The compassionate Italian guessed in a moment that the disconsolate little creature in native blue was the sorella of the English boy with her Chinese *bambino;* and concluding at once that they must have been among the sufferers from yesterday's riot, she proposed to take them back with her to Hankow.

Greville grasped her hand in an outburst of gratitude, when four strong coolies rushed upon him, seized him by his arms and legs, and carried him off.

"Tell father to come and fetch me himself, Cornelia!" he shouted, as they bore him off to his appointed place of detention.

The sorella obtained permission for Cornelia and Koh-pi to come indoors and sit in a corner of the doorkeeper's room, with Whang for a guard, whilst she had her interview with the mandarin's lady.

Cornelia sank upon the ground in mute dismay, ready to wish herself back among the kindly bonzes; and yet, in the midst of all this trouble, there was a chance—no, almost a certainty—of getting home at last.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SET FREE.

WHEN Greville found himself on the other side of the screen, he broke away from his captors, flinging them from him right and left with a merry laugh, as if he regarded their behaviour to him as so much rough play. "Lead on!" he cried, walking back to the court with the greatest complacency.

The coolies, who regarded him as "too plenty masterful" to be handled by them, formed themselves into a bodyguard, and conducted him across the second court to the room where the secretary was engaged in drawing up a report of the alarming disturbances in Hankow, which were expanding in every direction beneath the flourish of his writing-brushes.

The lower half of the walls of the room was painted black and yellow; the upper half being all window, made the apartment unusually light.

Greville got ahead of his attendants and marched up to the secretary's table, holding out his hand, English fashion.

"You know me," he said. "I saw you yesterday in the court-room at the English Concession."

The secretary rose and looked him all over doubtfully as the coolies delivered their message.

"Not the right boy," repeated the secretary.

"I am the right boy," persisted Greville. "Look at me. I am in a sorry plight, for I have barely escaped with my life from the hands of the river-thieves by wading through a mud-shoal. All I want is a messenger to carry a letter to my father. I can promise him a large reward as soon as he reaches Hankow."

Greville glanced round at the faces of his body-guard. A large reward has a very alluring sound in Chinese ears.

"A letter!" repeated the secretary, who was also his master's interpreter: "yes, a letter was brought here, and the mandarin sent for the writer."

"I am the writer," persisted Greville. "Lend me that brush and a sheet of paper, and I will soon convince you of that. I will write my letter over again without seeing it. Will that satisfy you?"

The secretary had a better memory than his master. He did recognize the impetuous, energetic tones of the Queen of England's cousin, who had spoken for Ting, and he began to think there might have been a mistake in another direction.

He lent his brushes. He found the sheet of paper, and watched the writing of the second letter. This

made it easy to detain Greville, according to his master's orders. He looked at the letter, shook his head, observing gravely, "I no savoy."

It lay on the table beside him.

"So much waste paper," thought Greville, in his despair.

One of the coolies returned with a little table, on which he arranged a pair of red chop-sticks and two or three squares of paper to wipe them on, a tiny saucer of soy, and a bowl of gelatine soup, with four or five tiny balls of flour and sausage-meat swimming in it. Greville devoured the little dumplings, as he called them, with great zest.

The coolie's eye was on the letter.

"Go findee message-man?" he asked, looking at Greville, who renewed his promise of the large reward awaiting its delivery.

The secretary made no objection.

The coolie walked off with the letter to the dejected team about to start on their fruitless search for the right children.

"Where go lookee?" he inquired. "These merchant's children want to go home. Then go lookee all along the road to Hankow. Leavee letter with their father when you get there."

The fellow's cunning black eyes began to twinkle as he bargained for his share of the reward on their return.

Greville, like a caged bird, was beating against the

bars, wondering whether any one of his three letters could by any possibility reach his father before the morning, when in walked Pao.

The duck-boy had released poor Old-ah-you and taken her home to the barge with his flock. As he started with his ducks the next morning, he encountered Pao, who had taken one route and his master another, in search of the missing children.

Whilst Mr. Lynthorne was threading the labyrinthine streets of Hankow, interviewing Chinese officials, lavishing cumshus on city policemen, and pressing everybody who would help him into his service, Pao took boat and pursued his inquiries along the river as far as the mud hut of Old-ah-you's grandfather, where Ting was found mourning over his losses; but here all information failed.

Pao decided to return with the disastrous intelligence that his master's children were last seen in the hands of the river-thieves. He persuaded Ting to go back with him to give his own report. On their way the wandering cormorant, with Greville's rag still tied to its ring, flew down obediently to its master's call. Pao could not read the writing, but he recognized the piece of Cornelia's dress, and carried it to Mrs. Lynthorne.

English and Chinese joined in the pursuit of the river-thieves. The sampan was recovered, but no farther tidings of the children anywhere. Night was coming on, when the boat in which Pao was sailing

was hailed by a party of coolies, with an empty sedan, wanting to cross to Hankow. Their urgency could not equal his own, but their destination proved to be the English Concession. Their respective errands were discussed. Pao sent them on with the letter he could not read, and started for Yuenki, where he was well known to many of the mandarin's household.

"Cornelia?" was the first word on Greville's lips, as his father's boy knocked his head on the ground at the sight of the young master he had given up for lost all unharmed before his eyes.

"Pao, Pao, have you found Cornelia?" repeated Greville, who had not ventured to allude to his sister in the secretary's hearing before.

Gone with the Italian lady, and gone without her brother, that was the puzzle to Pao.

"*Masquie*" (Never mind), said the secretary, who began to see daylight; "he can follow."

"I fetch away my master's son," answered Pao. "I no can stop."

"Good," observed the secretary; and out they went, escaping the tedious ceremonial of a formal leave-taking of the magistrate.

A clean white robe and a palm-leaf hat were begged or borrowed by Pao, making Greville look like a chorister boy when he leaves the vestry for the chancel.

To the star-shine and the river, to father and home
There was singing in Greville's heart as the morning

dawned over the three broad acres of low, level roofs, and his father's hand grasped his to help him out of the boat.

"Father, will you ever forgive me for starting off with Cornelia without your knowledge? But you will let me tell you how it all came about?"

"Cornelia told me everything when I found her at the Italian sister's. Go in to your mother, eat and sleep, and leave talk until to-morrow."

"But Raynham, father—have you seen him?" asked Greville anxiously.

"I have done with Raynham," returned Mr. Lynthorne.

"But he was so hurt," added Greville.

"So he said; but the ship-surgeon tells a different tale," was the rejoinder.

"But where is he, father?"

"Shipped off to England; and he may think himself lucky with half-a-year's salary in his pocket, and a cleared course to begin his life anew on better lines. I am not the man to be taken in a second time."

THE END.

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